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A Description and Analysis of the Scholarly Response Paper as an Academic Genre: Determining How Linguistic, Social, and Psychological Variables Affect Its Success/Failure and the Professional Credibility of Its Author.

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A DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE PAPER AS
AN ACADEMIC GENRE: DETERMINING HOW LINGUISTIC, SOCIAL, AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES AFFECT ITS SUCCESS/FAILURE AND THE
PROFESSIONAL CREDIBILITY OF ITS AUTHOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

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*For my father, the Great White Hunter, and my mother, the Peanut-Butter
Cookie Queen.*

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.

Robert Frost

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ABSTRACT

The study of various documents and genres within professional discourse communities can provide valuable insight into what does or does not constitute successful written communication within such groups. The primary purpose of the current study was to examine scholarly response papers published in five different “English” journals in order to (1) define and describe the scholarly response paper and (2) explore various theories/rules/studies which could be used to gauge its success: Grice’s Maxims, studies of semantic (denotative and evaluative) verb force, Lakoff’s Rules of Politeness, and studies of language intensity.

Feedback from a select group of editors and scholarly readers indicated that the primary purpose of the response is to promote the scholarly exchange of information; that response papers can reasonably be termed successful or unsuccessful according whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue; that the success or non-success of such dialogue can be affected by the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information and highly intense language; and that respondents’ failure to manage face and identity concerns, such as the need to protect personal status, may result in unsuccessful scholarly response papers and a loss of professional credibility which may adversely affect peer standing.

Findings also reveal that while Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and intense language *often* have a negative effect on the success of the response, they do not *always* have such an effect and thus their presence or absence cannot fully predict the overall success of the response in all cases. However, responses which fulfilled the purpose of the response and which do not

exhibit Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity are nearly always rated successful overall, and are always fortified with positive stylistic elements such as validating another scholar's arguments. Therefore, findings imply that scholars should avoid Maxim violations and violations of the Rules of Politeness; keep potentially negative verbs and intense language to a minimum; and balance any negative criticism with positive stylistic elements in order to consistently produce successful responses.

INTRODUCTION

During my second semester as a graduate student in LSU's English Department, I stumbled into a class that turned out to be one of the most helpful and functional classes I had taken since Mrs. Humphreys taught me how to type in the tenth grade: Writing For Academic Publication. Up until this point, I knew very little about the types of documents I would be expected to produce as a practicing academic and even less about submitting these documents for public scrutiny. Thankfully, this class not only filled in the blanks, it piqued my interest in academic writing and the steps the academic writer must take in order to become a successful (i.e. publishing) member of the professional academic discourse community.

Part of learning to write professional academic documents includes examining examples of such documents and determining if they will be perceived as appropriate or inappropriate, successful or unsuccessful, according to a given set of standards regarding form, content, etc. by other members of the discourse community. And in Writing For Academic Publication, I encountered a scholarly response paper which immediately struck me as inappropriate and unsuccessful. The title of this article is "A Response to K. Scott Ferguson and Frank Parker's 'Grammar and Technical Writing'" (1992) and its author, Harris, is responding to Parker and Ferguson's (1990) criticism of his original research article, "Linguistics, Technical Writing, and Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar" (1988). I have excerpted its final paragraph below:

I have strong reservations about the scheme Ferguson and Parker offer—in particular, that it is only a set of statements to be memorized, not a set of principles to be learned; in short, that it is not linguistics. But I will leave it to readers of both articles to decide what might be useful to them in each, and leave the meanspirited, school-yardish, my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation to Ferguson and Parker. (57)

After reading Harris's response in its entirety, I quickly came to the following conclusions:

1. Harris's vocabulary, made up of words and phrases like "meanspirited" and "my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation," seemed childish and contextually inappropriate given that it clashed wildly with the professional and largely dispassionate tone of the other two documents in the triad.
2. Harris seemed to be violating the purpose of the scholarly response by focusing on his critics and not the criticism they offered.
3. Violating the purpose of the scholarly response made Harris appear absurd and unprofessional and thus threatened his scholarly credibility.

The preceding conclusions, however, were based mainly on casual observations and gut feelings. So in order to prove that this kind of scholarly response paper was inappropriate, unsuccessful, and a threat to professional scholarly credibility, I wrote a seminar paper where I attempted to answer the following basic questions:

1. What is the exact definition of the scholarly response paper (e.g. a paper which offers criticism, exchanges practical and/or theoretical information, etc.) and what are its boundaries as a genre within the academic discourse community?
2. Can scholarly response papers be reasonably termed successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue? If so, by what formal methods or theories can one determine whether or not a scholarly response paper is appropriate or inappropriate, successful or unsuccessful?

3. What factors might cause a scholar to respond unsuccessfully, and how and to what degree does the success or failure of a scholarly response paper affect scholarly credibility?
4. How can the answers to the preceding questions be of use to the writers and potential writers of the scholarly response paper?

Using studies of discourse communities (e.g. "Discourse Communities, Sacred Texts, and Institutional Norms"; Freed and Broadhead 1987), studies in linguistic theory (e.g. "Logic and Conversation"; Grice 1975); studies in social psychology theories (e.g. "Effects of Language Intensity Similarity on Perceptions of Credibility, Relational Attributions, and Persuasion"; Aune and Kikuchi 1993); and studies in composition theory (e.g. "Detection, Diagnosis, and the Strategies of Revision"; Flower, et. al 1986) to analyze various scholarly responses (e.g. Harris 1992) allowed me to answer these questions in part. Thus the goal of the current study has been to expand my initial study, using my dissertation to attempt a more thorough analysis.

Each chapter of this study, then, documents my attempts to answer one or more of the aforementioned basic questions. I must stress here that this study, though already an expansion of a briefer research inquiry, is still very much a preliminary inquiry and thus primarily descriptive and investigatory in nature. As in most initial studies, findings were not always expected nor conclusive.

JUSTIFICATION

In conducting this study of the scholarly response paper, I have come to believe that it is both important and suitable for dissertation-length discussion for several reasons. First of all, because I strongly agree with Tracy and Muller (1994) who state in one

study of academic communicative practices that “any talk occasion [or in my case writing occasion] . . . central to the accomplishment of institutional goals deserves careful scrutiny” (319). For example, Freed and Broadhead (1987) support the increased frequency of discourse analysis studies in both academic and professional fields, concluding that a lack of familiarity with and understanding of various principles of academic writing may cause problems both for graduate students and more experienced members of academic discourse communities for whom writing is a large part of participation; studies like Bizzell (1982), Bruffee (1984), Reither (1985), and Berkenkotter, et al. (1988) also support this conclusion.

Therefore, I would like this study to complement studies such as Rymer (1988), Myers (1990), Hunston (1993), Tracy and Carjuzáa (1993), and Tracy and Muller (1994), all of which examine how academics view writing, how writing is shaped by personal and professional concerns, and how effective documents are actually ordered and constructed in order to both discover what kinds of documents are acceptable and how to produce them. Furthermore, in terms of writing research, I believe it is important to expand the field of inquiry. While Rymer (1988) and Myers (1990) are two of many important studies of the academic research article, there are other genres which deserve attention as well as Swales (1991) proves in his analysis of citations in academic research.

Also, I believe there is sometimes a need in the study of academic communication, not simply to describe, define, or explicate, but also to challenge existing methods, standards, and behaviors of achieving communication if they are not as effective as they could be, and the current study also functions in this way to some degree. In regard to

the study of intellectual discussion among academics, Tracy and Carjuzáa (1993) state that but for a few exceptions, “intellectual discussion among academics has received little attention,” perhaps because studies of academics by academics were regarded as “self-indulgent and not easily warrantable given the range of talk occasions that had not yet been investigated” (172). But the authors’ final hypothesis is more striking: “Perhaps academics were uncomfortable with the thought of submitting their own actions to the microscope they turn on others” (172). I do not doubt that this is in part the case since in the current study of the scholarly response paper, I encountered scholars who either appeared unwilling to confront the existence of flawed communicative methods or had already accepted this fact but were reluctant to state publicly that they believed respondents should definitely uphold a fairly concrete set of critical standards in order to support the professional exchange of information. However, I also encountered readers and writers who were not so hostile or reluctant, realizing that we in academia can make changes for the better if we so choose. Rankin (1998) certainly makes this point in “Changing the Hollow Conventions of Academic Writing,” where she suggests that academics modify their use of the typical introductory literature review in the research article. She states:

As writers, teachers, and editors, we must acknowledge our own power to perpetuate or to change the sometimes hollow and mechanical conventions of academic writing. It’s important that we talk more openly about them. In doing so, we may find ways to convey in our writing the intellectual excitement that actually motivates our scholarly lives. (A64)

And in writing about academic conflict in general in an opinion piece entitled “In Wars of Words, a Role for Rules of Etiquette,” Lefkowitz (1998) worries that “academics have forgotten that the fundamental purpose of debate is to provide information,” and in many cases are putting personal agendas over professional benefits (A64). She suggests

a concerted effort to return to more formalized types of critique in order to avoid this.

Thus like Rankin and Lefkowitz, my attempt to isolate unsuccessful means of criticism in this study also points to possible need for change.

Finally, I believe this study is important for the following, more specific reasons:

1. Very little research on the scholarly response paper as a particular genre has been conducted. However, studies of conflict in academic discourse such as Hunston (1993) have already appeared, and a study of a critical genre like the scholarly response paper would seem to be a beneficial and logical extension of these, and
2. The results of such research will be useful to academic writers, most of whom will at some point write a scholarly response paper and whose positions demand that they write and publish successfully and credibly.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE PAPER AND ITS ROLE IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I address question one, the first part of question two, and question three; in other words:

1. What is the exact definition of the scholarly response paper and what are its boundaries as a genre within the academic discourse community?
2. Can scholarly response papers be reasonably termed successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue?
3. What factors might cause a scholar to respond unsuccessfully, and how and to what degree does the success or failure of a scholarly response paper affect scholarly credibility?

In addressing these questions, I first discuss academia as a discourse community, using studies of general discourse communities, academic/professional writing, and discourse analysis to inform my discussion.

Second, I define the scholarly response paper and its purpose and function as a genre within this community and within the English academic discourse community in particular, using studies of other academic genres as well as what research exists regarding the scholarly response to inform my discussion.

Third, I discuss the role of the individual response writer, focussing on factors which may cause respondents to respond inappropriately and unsuccessfully and on what this may cost the respondent in terms of professional credibility. Finally, I use

primary data gathered from questionnaires completed by readers and editors in order to determine what members of the discourse community consider appropriate means of constructing a response, what makes a response successful or unsuccessful, and what effects an unsuccessful response may have on scholarly credibility.

Before beginning a discussion of the scholarly response paper, it is important to know more about the academic discourse community within which it functions, the function and purpose of the scholarly response paper as a specific genre, and how this genre may involve and affect individual members of the academic discourse community. Therefore, this chapter provides:

1. A brief discussion of academia as a discourse community. This discussion will include the definition and purpose of the overall academic discourse community as well as that of the “English” academic discourse communit[ies] which are the more specific subjects of the current study. It will also describe the typical genres which are the foundation of academic communication, both spoken and written (e.g. conference presentations and research articles), and the generally accepted rules and guidelines which determine appropriate ways of promoting successful communication within such genres.

Studies which inform this discussion include Altick 1950; Hymes 1972; Freedman 1984; Armstrong 1985; Freed and Broadhead 1987; Andersen 1988; Berkenkotter, et. al. 1988; Rymer 1988; Williamson 1988; Jolliffe and Brier 1988; Swales 1990; Swales 1991; Hunston 1993; Tracy and Baratz 1993; and Tracy and Muller 1994.

2. A definition of the scholarly response paper as an important genre within the academic discourse community. Such a definition includes a statement of the purpose of the scholarly response paper, a discussion of what linguistic and stylistic means are considered appropriate in constructing a successful response paper and a discussion of how such means are sometimes difficult to determine in the struggle to find a balance between personal and professional communicative goals.

Studies which inform this discussion include: Gumperz 1972; Hymes 1974; Freed and Broadhead 1987; Jolliffe and Brier 1988; Swales 1990; Tracy and Baratz 1993; Tracy and Muller 1994; Hasan 1994; and Parker and Riley 1995.

3. A discussion of how this genre may involve and affect the individual respondent. This discussion includes both an overview of writer motivations (e.g. the need to save face) and the possible results of such motivations (e.g. diminished professional credibility among peers/readers).

Studies which inform this discussion include: McLaughlin 1975; Delia 1976; Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987; Liska 1978; Arndt and Janney 1979; Moulton 1983; Pryor and Buchanan 1984; Blair 1986; Kline 1987; Thompkins 1988; Fleming, et al. 1990; Holtgraves and Yang 1990; Nwoye 1992; Buck 1993; Kwarciak 1993; Riley 1993; Tracy and Carjuzáa 1993; Tracy and Naughton 1994; Jones, et al. 1995; Meier 1995; Herring 1996; Tannen 1998; Rankin 1998; and Lefkowitz 1998.

Also included in these discussions is primary data from questionnaires completed by readers and editors connected with the journals featured in this study, data which provides firsthand insights into the scholarly response paper.

ACADEMIA AS A DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF A DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

What is presently considered the study of **discourse communities** began as the study of **speech communities**. Hymes (1972) defines the speech community as “a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety” (e.g. standard, vernacular, dialect, etc.) (Freed and Broadhead 154). However, as Freed and Broadhead point out in “Discourse Communities, Sacred Texts, and Institutional Norms,” “the terminology seems to be changing . . . in order to signal the focus on the written rather than just the spoken” (154).

And in *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, Swales (1990) points out other important distinctions between speech and discourse communities. First, speech communities are based on sociolinguistic groupings, while discourse communities are based on sociorhetorical ones. For example a group of people who have lived in Manhattan all their lives are part of the same speech community, while the members of an international stamp club involved in the business of a common hobby are part of the same discourse community, no matter where they hail from. Also,

[s]peech communities are centripetal (they tend to absorb people into that general fabric), whereas discourse communities are centrifugal (they tend to separate people into occupational or specialty-interest groups). A speech community typically inherits its membership by birth, accident, or adoption; a discourse community recruits its members by persuasion, training or relevant qualification. (24)

Since the focus of this study is a written genre produced by members of a specific professional institution (academia), I will continue to use the term **discourse community**, as opposed to **speech community**, throughout this study.

In order to qualify as a discourse community, a group must exhibit the following characteristics, or must

1. Have a broadly agreed set of common public goals (formal or informal, concrete or abstract).
2. Have mechanisms of intercommunication among its members (meetings, newsletters, conversations, etc.)
3. Use its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback (also sometimes for secondary purposes, such as making money in a brokerage house or “denting the research front” in an academic department [Swales 25-27]).
4. Utilize and hence possess one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims (academia has conference presentations, research articles, etc.)
5. Have acquired some specific lexis (jargon)
6. Have a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content knowledge and discursual expertise (in academia, this would be a “reasonable ratio” between graduate students and seasoned tenured professors). (from *Genre Analysis*; Swales 25-27)

Generally, then, the purpose of the discourse community is best illustrated by the second characteristic in this list: *primarily to provide information and feedback*, in other

words, to *promote communication* between members of the discourse community. And as Williamson notes, “membership in a discourse community facilitates communication because it bestows familiarity with the registers that are used by other members of the community in speaking and writing, empowering the individual to act on and through that community, in effect, to display membership” (94).

As we will find in the next section, the purpose of the *academic* discourse community differs only concerning specific professional ideals (e.g. the search for truth) and particular restraints necessary to fulfilling the purpose of its specific genres (e.g. the scholarly response paper).

THE ACADEMIC DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

Purpose

If academia could be described as an industry, it might be termed an “idea factory.” While the purpose of an academic discourse community, like any other discourse community, is to provide information and feedback to its members, members of the academia discourse community often recognize another, equally important purpose, which is to share information and feedback in the attempt to reach greater enlightenment or truth. So of course, successful communication is an extremely important part of this pursuit. Tracy and Muller (1994) go so far as to say that “of all institutions in society, universities have the deepest investment in, and commitment to, cultivating talk about ideas,” an opinion echoed by Tracy and Baratz (1993):

There are many kinds of talk that occur in universities—lecture talk, money and budget talk, problem-solving and decision-making talk—but of all the kinds of talk, none is as prized as participation in intellectual discussion. It is, in fact, the kind of talk that sets the university apart from other institutions in our society; nowhere else is intellectual discussion valued as highly or enacted as frequently. (300)

Academics seem justified in holding intellectual exchange in such esteem since many of the discoveries, creations, and interpretations which enrich our lives and increase our knowledge of ourselves and our world either begin at the university or are produced by those trained there.

And, of course, the purpose of the academic discourse community is even more specific when shaped by the needs and goals of different academic fields. And in this study, we are in fact focussing on the goals of the academic discourse community within “English” studies. For example, in Altick’s *The Scholar Adventurers* (1950), in the chapter entitled “The Unsung Scholar,” the author discusses the goal of modern literary research, to make discoveries about people and times past, which may in turn shape how we understand and relate to ourselves in the present:

Literary research is frequently dull and laborious beyond description, and even the most devoted scholar will admit as much. Much of it ends in despair, because history, however briskly prodded, simply refuses to talk. A great deal of it, furthermore, gives the world nothing but a heap of uninteresting and unusable facts dredged up from the silt where they might just as well have remained to the end of time; and here again those scholars who retain perspective along with their professional convictions would agree. But that same research has nevertheless provided us with an understanding of the books we treasure which was impossible fifty or a hundred years ago. There is not a major author in English or American letters who has not emerged a clearer, more meaningful figure because of the work of the professional literary fact-finders, whether they have been breathing the choking dust of six hundred years in a grimy structure in London’s Chancery Lane, the air-conditioned immaculacy of the lovely Georgian building at Harvard where rest some of the finest of Keat’s manuscripts, or the languorous breezes of Melville’s South Pacific. (3-4)

“English” studies, though is a very general term used to describe a number of “sub-fields” which include among other things, the study of linguistics, technical and professional writing, composition and rhetoric, and critical theory, as well as English literature. This is why this preliminary study examines the scholarly response papers

produced by writers in five journals of these subfields (*Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, *The Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *College Composition and Communication*, and *Publications of the Modern Language Association*); in this way, we may begin to understand whether or not field-centered goals affect the outcome of documents within this genre.

Variations

In beginning this study, I did not know for sure if, for instance, the scholarly responses written by linguists would differ from those written by literary critics, but predicted that some differences would probably emerge based on studies which include comparisons of larger academic discourse communities. One such study is outlined by Hunston in an article entitled “Professional Conflict: Disagreement in Academic Discourse” (1993). In her survey of the introductions to several oppositional articles, Hunston attempted to “describe the linguistic strategies by which the writer attempts to achieve the required outcome: persuasion of the readership to accept the writer’s claim above all opposition” (116). In doing so, she compared the conflict presentation in the research articles of three disciplines [biochemistry, sociolinguistics, and history, representing Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities respectively] in order to “throw light on the choices available and to link the strategies chosen with the value-system of each discourse community” (116).

In her subsequent findings, Hunston was able to report that “to a certain extent, the papers do divide satisfactorily along discipline lines” (131):

In the science texts, there is an assumption that the physical world is homogeneous and that observation of that world leads, inevitably, to correct interpretation. Differences in observation cannot be tolerated and are reinterpreted in terms of distortion by the experimental process itself. Conflict

is, to a certain extent, presented as an unfortunate by-product of human fallibility, not part of the discovery process itself.

In the sociolinguistics texts, on the other hand, it is not assumed that speakers will be so homogeneous that investigation of one group will lead to data that can be reliably generalized to all groups. Neither is it assumed that observation will lead inevitably to a model. The relating of data to model—the interpretation—is where human intervention and therefore conflict occurs. Resolution can be brought about by amassing data as evidence, but also by the construction of the most convincing argument.

In the history texts, although new data can be brought as evidence to support Proposed Claims against Opposed ones (as in H1), there is no necessity for this to be so, and the conflict can be resolved by forcefulness or reasonableness of argument alone (as in H2). As regards the discovery process, it is assumed that human intervention is crucial in selecting, assessing and interpreting evidence, and that it is this intervention, and its concomitant conflict, which constitutes the discipline itself. (132)

As one can see, the nature of the discipline, the focus and subject of its study, in part determines the ways in which members of each discourse community may respond to opposition. This is why I expected to and did observe some differences in what, for example, a linguist and a literary critic consider appropriate and successful means of constructing a scholarly response paper (revealed in Chapters Three-Seven). This does not mean, however, that all linguist respondents will always produce a uniform type of scholarly response paper that the majority of linguist readers will agree to be appropriate and successful. In Hunston's study, for example,

The two linguistics texts, in particular, show significant differences, with the empirically-based L1 having more in common with the science texts and the argumentative L2 showing a greater similarity with the history texts. . . . In particular, there is a difference between L2 with its greater use of attitudinal language and L1 with its science-like reliance upon implicit value. (132)

While Hunston does not examine the possible causes of such differences; attempt to judge which technique is better in fulfilling larger communicative goals and which best supports the writer's professional credibility; or suggest that one form may be—in the

larger scheme of sociolinguistic publications—a flawed example or even an aberration; making such determinations is part of the current study, as will be revealed in the chapters concerning analysis.

Attaining Membership

Before becoming contributing members of their discourse communities, academics must first develop a certain “know-how” concerning acceptable subject matter, preferred styles of writing, organization of particular genres, etc. in order to be able to produce “texts that are [at least] minimally competent in academic or professional situations” (Jolliffe and Brier 37).

Sometimes this knowledge is gained, or partly gained, through formal instruction, i.e. professional academic writing courses like the one cited in the introduction to this study. However, although such courses are quite valuable, they do not seem widely available at present and are useful only to new members of the academic discourse community, such as graduate students. Thus the new members of academic discourse communities, like their well-seasoned peers, must learn primarily by observation and active participation. Berkenkotter, et al.’s (1988) study of “Nate,” a “skilled novice writer” in his first year as a Ph.D. student in a university rhetoric program, shows that learning in this way, by sometimes painful trial and error, is not always amusing. One has to sympathize with poor Nate who, as Berkenkotter, et al. state, had “become frustrated in knowing that his writing was not good, that he had not cracked the code of academic writing” (21). As Nate himself put it, “I feel like I’m butting heads finally with ACADEMIC WRITING—and it is monstrous and unfathomable” (21).

Learning eventually becomes easier, though, as the academic writer continues to learn by observation and active participation. More specifically, the writer, by reading

and writing various academic texts, such as research articles and book reviews, begins to learn the pattern for each text and what elements are required for each. (Learning by modeling is very common, and Jolliffe and Brier report that the “idea that paradigms guide the knowledge work of disciplines has been widely accepted” in writing research and instruction [45]).

Another important facet of a writer’s knowledge is getting to know his or her readership or audience, the “intellectual community who will read and pass judgment on his or her work” (Jolliffe and Brier 38). Writers accomplish this both by, as Jolliffe and Brier state, “sharing drafts of their writing and interacting with their peers about the community’s knowledge work,” and (sometimes) through the criticism of published work (as is the case for writers of research articles whose work is criticized in scholarly response papers) (39).

To summarize, the academic writer must have all of the following to write successfully:

- Knowledge of the discipline as a discourse community;
- Knowledge of the subject matters writers in a discipline may write about, the methods writers in the discipline use to investigate subject matters in order to write about them, and the lines of argument or explanation writers employ in their texts;
- Knowledge of the ways writers in a discipline organize, arrange, and format their texts; and,
- Knowledge of the acceptable styles—in general terms, the syntax and diction—that writers in a discipline employ. (Jolliffe and Brier 38)

However, whether or not writers always employ such knowledge consciously is a complex question. More experienced writers probably employ such knowledge unconsciously, to a greater degree, while less experienced writers must think more carefully about the specific components of their texts. And even expert writers, as Jolliffe and Brier point out, “seem to exhibit different degrees of awareness from one writing experience to the next in their knowledge of such whole-discourse matters as how to argue a position and how to create a certain text type, as well as in their knowledge of word- or sentence-level linguistic alternatives” (37). It is also worth noting that experienced writers may use certain writing strategies which are not accepted or well-accepted by their discourse community even though they “know better.” There are a variety of reasons for this, but in the current study, the most central of these would be the writer’s drive to address personal rather than professional concerns.

General Outlets for Communication

Types

There are various forums, or genres, through which members of the English academic discourse community conduct the exchange of information. These may be spoken (e.g. conferences and colloquia) or written (e.g. research articles and book reviews). As Swales (1991) points out in his bibliography of current studies in discourse analysis, where academic *writing* is concerned, “scholarly activity has continued to concentrate on the genre of the research article” (106). However, there are various other genres which have received attention as well, such as abstracts, research presentations, grant proposals, theses and dissertations, and requests. And there are

doubtless other genres which would benefit from study. Swales (1990) lists titles as being one of these, having known a biologist whose career suffered due to his failure to recognize “the humorous effects of the titles of his first two publications: ‘Some British Pansies,’ followed by ‘An Irruption of Tits in Norfolk’” (*Genre Analysis* 222). And I believe that the focus of this study, the scholarly response paper, fits here as well.

Furthermore, studies of these genres may be primarily *descriptive*, as in Rymer’s “Scientific Composing Processes: How Eminent Scientists Write Journal Articles” (1988); *investigatory*, as in Tracy and Muller’s “Talking About Ideas: Academics’ Beliefs About Appropriate Communicative Practices” (1994); or *pedagogical* in nature, as in Swales’ *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings* (1990). As stated in the Introduction, the purpose of the current study is primarily descriptive and investigatory, the goal being to first describe and define the scholarly response paper, then discover whether certain linguistic and stylistic variables may determine the success or non-success of these documents.

Registers

All genres involve some sort of general code, stated or unstated, which dictates what strategies are appropriate in producing successful examples of each. Such codes can be defined most generally as **registers**.

Williamson (1988) describes a register as being composed of three variables: *field* (the activity and function of language within that activity); *tenor* (status and role relationships of participants); and *mode* (transmission characteristics and text typology). Using the appropriate register within the context of a given genre is the key to successful academic writing and may be in some cases “the basis for promotion and

tenure as well as the basis for recognition within the discipline” (Williamson 92). In support of this argument, Williamson cites a study by Freedman (1984) where teachers assigned grades to texts written by both student and professional writers, texts which the teachers assumed were written by student writers only. In this study, the professional writers received “inconsistent ratings . . . indicating that teachers have different thresholds of tolerance for violation of their expectations about the register of school writing” (93):

Professional writers, more fluent than the novice student writers, could be considered to have failed the assignment in one sense, because they did not understand the social setting of the school, the context in which their texts would be read. Of course, as novice writers, some students failed and some succeeded, depending upon their relative fluency with the register. Teachers could rate student essays consistently, however, as successes or failures because the students were attempting to communicate within the appropriate register. (93)

The same principle applies to writers in the English academic discourse community; their texts may be judged unsuccessful by other members of the community if they either (1) employ the wrong register or (2) do not employ the correct register correctly or consistently in a given genre. In his article, “Overwriting and Other Techniques for Success with Academic Articles” (1988), Andersen examines a number of studies concerning academics’ successful and unsuccessful use of registers. In one such study, Armstrong (1985) took samples of research articles from ten prestigious academic journals and applied the Flesch Reading Ease Test to them, finding that “the more prestigious the journal, the more difficult [they] were to read” (Andersen 152). Four of these previously published articles were then rewritten in either easier (cutting out unnecessary words, substituting easy for difficult words, etc.) or more complex (doing the reverse) styles and given to thirty-two academics who were asked to “rate the competence of the research” (Andersen 152). Armstrong found that:

In all cases the original articles were rated higher than the simpler rewrites, while the more difficult rewrites were rated almost as high. This suggests the style of articles should not be too simple but that there may be a plateau of complexity above which it would be foolish to clamber. (Andersen 152)

In other words, appropriate register dictates the level of success. But arriving at a more concrete understanding of this principle for current purposes requires a more in-depth discussion of genre, the genre of the scholarly response paper in particular, and discussion of what is considered an appropriate register for writers of the scholarly response paper.

THE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE PAPER AS AN IMPORTANT GENRE WITHIN THE ENGLISH ACADEMIC DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

In order to thoroughly define and describe the scholarly response paper as a specific genre, a general discussion of genre definition and purpose seems necessary. Therefore this section includes the five facets of what Swales (1990) has determined to be a “working definition of genre” (45-58):

1. A genre is a class of communicative events.
2. The principle criterial feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes.
3. Exemplars or instances of genres vary in their prototypicality.
4. The rationale behind a genre establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning and form.
5. A discourse community’s nomenclature for genres is an important source of insight. (45-58)

Each facet will then be applied to the genre of the scholarly response paper.

Class of Communicative Events

Most simply, a **scholarly response paper** is a published critique of another scholar's published research article. All of the scholarly journals included in the current study publish scholarly response papers with greater or lesser frequency, some as individual documents, and some in sections dedicated to scholarly response papers in particular.

Shared Set of Communicative Purposes

The general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information. However, there are actually two forms of scholarly response papers, which are interrelated and exhibit slightly different purposes. These I term **primary** and **secondary responses**:

Primary Response: This form of response involves two professional articles, one written in response to the first. K. Scott Ferguson and Frank Parker's "Grammar and Technical Writing" (1990), written in response to R.A. Harris's "Linguistics, Technical Writing, and Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar" (1988) is an example of a primary response.

Secondary Response: This form of response involves three professional articles, and is in simple terms, a response to a response. Thus while the author of a primary response *offers* criticism, the author of a secondary response *offers* and *responds* to criticism. Harris's "A Response to K. Scott Ferguson and Frank Parker's 'Grammar and Technical Writing'" (1992) is an example of a secondary response.

Still, it would seem that the central purpose of both forms is to promote the scholarly exchange of information, a conclusion supported by a majority (14 out of 17) of the readers and editors surveyed for this study.

Variance in Prototypicality

Not all scholarly response papers look alike. The scholarly response papers in *Applied Linguistics*, for example, tend to be longer and more formal than the ones in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. While scholarly response papers in *Applied Linguistics* tend to be very organized, including even abstracts and point by point analyses of the article being critiqued, *PMLA* respondents often “jump right in” with little or no backgrounding.

The same principle applies to response titles. Titles in *Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, and the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* often exhibit original flair, meaning that they do not always include the names or titles of the other authors and articles and involved; for example, Francis and Sinclair’s primary response to Owen’s “Corpus-Based Grammar and the Heineken Effect: Lexico-grammatical Description for Language Learners” (1993) is entitled “‘I Bet He Drinks Carling Black Label’: A Riposte to Owen on Corpus Grammar” (1994). Titles in *College Composition and Communication* and *PMLA*, though, are generally very plain, composed solely of related names, titles, and general headings; for example, in *CCC*, the typical primary response paper always includes the author and title of the original article and looks like this: “Response to Lester Faigley, ‘Judging Writing, Judging Selves’” (Holland 1991). The titles of *PMLA* secondary responses are the plainest of all: “Reply,” the rest of the title being the title of the preceding primary response.

Constraints on Content, Positioning and Form

Such a rationale corresponds roughly with what Hasan (1994) calls an outline of a given discourse type, an “overall plan, or general formula” (128). Part of the current study included obtaining feedback from the editors of the journals which published the responses analyzed in this study. These editors were asked whether they require respondents to meet any general criteria regarding form, style, and content, and in particular if they require respondents to:

1. Include in their responses a general abstract, outline, or summary of the article or primary response to which they are responding.
2. Meet a certain page limit.
3. Prove the necessity of publishing a response (i.e. explain their rationale).
4. Respond within a certain time period (e.g. within two years of the original article’s publication).
5. Include their names.

None of the three editors surveyed said they *require* respondents to provide a general abstract, outline, or summary of the article or primary response, although two of these said responses should be “to the point.” All editors require respondents to meet a certain page limit, two added that responses “should be brief,” and one suggested an average length of 2-5 pages.

Two of the editors said they require respondents to prove the necessity of publishing a response; one referred to establishing such proof as being “in clear dialogue with the article they’re responding to.” Only one of the editors said he required respondents to respond within a certain time period, in this case “within one year of the original.” And

none of the editors said they require respondents to include their names, although one editor did state that “scholarly response papers are almost always signed.”

Nomenclature As Insight

Since research concerning the scholarly response paper has not been widespread, there is no widely-accepted term which describes the genre. I myself was first introduced to this genre as simply the *response paper* in Parker and Riley’s *Writing for Academic Publication* (1995). Upon beginning the current study, I adopted, then modified the term to reflect its inclusion in academic writing genres. However, the editors and scholars who provided insight into the scholarly response paper for this study seemed to have no trouble accepting the term *scholarly response paper* or in identifying these documents as responses to scholarly research and criticism.

SPECIFIC RULES FOR APPROPRIATENESS AS CONCERNS SUCCESS

All discourse communities have “preferred styles,” certain “ways of speaking” that members of the community acknowledge as appropriate means of achieving a given communicative purpose (Gumperz 1972; Hymes 1974; Jolliffe and Brier 1988). Because using appropriate means is an important part of achieving purpose, what Jolliffe and Brier (1988) refer to as *terms of appropriateness*—determinate patterns of syntax, diction, etc.—are key in determining whether or not a given document is successful or unsuccessful (51). It is extremely important that writers accept such terms of appropriateness so that they not only contribute successfully to the professional discussion for the benefit of the entire community, but also so that they establish their own professional credibility. As Freed and Broadhead (1987) state:

Both overtly and tacitly, these communities establish paradigms that discourses adhere to or, often at their risk, depart from. The paradigms reign like prelates

and governments reign: they set an agenda and attempt to guarantee its meeting, often rewarding those who do and discouraging those who don't. They legislate conduct and behavior, establishing the eminently kosher as well as the unseemly and untoward. (156)

In their study of academics' beliefs concerning appropriate ways to conduct intellectual discussions, for example, Tracy and Muller (1994) found that in general, "participants agreed on what was appropriate emotional expression. In a nutshell, participants viewed feelings of passion, caring, and involvement as good and feelings of defensiveness, hostility, and personal attack as bad" (336). In other words, "passion about ideas is good; attack of people is bad" (Tracy and Muller 337). This finding is directly applicable to the current study, since the purpose of the colloquia is quite similar to that of the scholarly response paper, in spite of the fact that it is a spoken, not a written genre. Moreover, I was able to gather data which has the same implications for the current study.

For example, the three editors participating in the current study were asked the following question:

1. It is generally accepted that among scholars of various fields and academic discourse communities, there are rules (sometimes unstated) which govern scholarly responses to criticism. Statements made by Richard D. Altick and John J. Fenstermaker (1993) in chapter eight of *The Art of Literary Research*, "The Scholar's Life," illustrate this point:

Our profession has no room for intemperate criticism of any kind, least of all in print. Differences of opinion there will always be, and scholarly competence not being a gift distributed equally among all practitioners, lapses of judgement and imperfections of knowledge will sometimes call for comment. . . . But the necessary process of debate and correction can, and should, be conducted with dignity and courtesy. Name-calling, personalities, aspersions on one's professional ability, and similar below-the-belt tactics are not to be condoned. Controversial points can be

made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility. (253)

What are your feelings on this topic? Do you agree that writers of scholarly response papers should take these words to heart? [(a) Strongly agree; (b) Agree; (c) Not sure; (d) Disagree; or (e) Strongly disagree] Please explain briefly the rationale behind your position.

Two of the three editors replied “strongly agree,” the third, “agree.” One editor added that “the goal of debate has to be progress and clarity of understanding and not winning, losing, and saving face.” (For a complete account of editor responses to this question, see Appendix B, Table B.9.) The 14 readers participating in this study were also asked the preceding question. Eight of the 14 replied “strongly agree,” four replied “agree,” one replied “disagree,” and one replied “strongly disagree.” Thus the majority of readers agreed that while response papers should be clear, pointed, and should offer information pertinent to the exchange, they should avoid being personally and/or emotionally oriented. (For a complete account of reader responses to this question, see Appendix E, Table E.1.)

In addition, editors were asked the following two-part question:

2. Do you agree that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information? Do you believe that any of the following elements threaten this goal and should be avoided?
 - a. Statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent’s personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).

- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort*, *attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").
- f. None of the above.

All three of the editors agreed that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information. Two of these believed that all of the preceding elements threaten this goal, and should thus be avoided (the other editor seemed to believe that these elements could be harmful, but did not point to any specifically to avoid "legislating style.") (For a complete account of editor responses to this question, see Appendix B, Table B.10.) And when the 14 readers were asked this question, the majority (11 out of 14) agreed that the general purpose of the response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information. Almost 75% of readers (nine out of 14) believed that (a) statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face are potentially harmful to the response, while over 75% (11 out of 14) believed that (b) accusations which cannot be proved or supported are potentially harmful to the response.

Furthermore, 50% of readers believed that (c) verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious are potentially harmful to the response, while over 75% (12 out of 14)

believed that (d) language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context is potentially harmful to the response. Finally, over 75% (11 out of 14) believed that (e) disproportionate language intensity is potentially harmful to the response, while only one reader in the entire sample believed that none of these elements are potentially harmful to the response. (For a complete account of reader responses to this question, see Appendix E, Table E.2.)

Also telling is editors' response to the Harris secondary response, featured in the Introduction to this study. Editors were first asked to read these passages from the Harris response, assuming that Ferguson and Parker's primary response was "nothing more than a dispassionate, professional alternate view" of the information presented in Harris's original article; they were also unaware of Harris's identity (he was presented as "Professor Brown"):

Ferguson and Parker's recent *attack* [1] on an earlier paper of mine [2] calls for a few brief comments, although I'm very surprised that I had to wait for its publication to see their criticisms. *Scholarly courtesy* should have led them, minimally, to send me a preprint. *Discourtesy*, however, is the least of their *scholarly transgressions*. *In their search for Bogey Man against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme*, they completely *distort* my original paper.

There are a good many *manglings* of my views and arguments in their paper by way of *selective quotation* and *misrepresentative rephrasing* which would be tedious to detail here, but anyone interested in the rhetoric of excision and paraphrase can find a number of interesting negative examples by mapping their quotations and representations against the original text. Of particular interest is the catalog of jargon terms with which they *indict* my supposedly obscure presentation [1, p. 359], all of which are much less formidable in context than in Ferguson and Parker's *quarantine* of them. The referees of [journal], in any case, found my discussion clear enough for their audience, and I have had many subsequent *compliments* from technical communicators on the lucidity with which I present some highly complex issues. The paper also won, to my very great pleasure, the *distinguished Jay Gould Award* for Excellence in Technical Communication. . . .

I have strong reservations about the scheme Ferguson and Parker offer—in particular, that it is only a set of statements to be memorized, not a set of principles to be learned; in short, that it is not linguistics. But I will leave it to readers of both articles to decide what might be useful to them in each, and leave the *mean-spirited, school-yardish, my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* to Ferguson and Parker. (53-56 emphasis added)

Editors were then asked to answer the following questions:

1. In general, do you believe that this scholarly response paper:
 - a. Promotes the scholarly exchange of information,
 - b. Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face, or
 - c. Does both of these?
2. Do you think that Brown's mention of compliments and awards is relevant to the scholarly exchange of information? In other words, does the compliment of one reader negate the criticism of another?
3. Do you think that an unfounded accusation such as *In their search for a Bogey Man against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme, they completely distort my original paper* is appropriate in this context?
4. Do you think that verbs such as *attack, distort, and indict* are appropriate in this context given that they imply a negative intent which seems unlikely or cannot be proved?
5. Do you believe that terms such as *mean-spirited, school-yardish, and my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* are appropriate in a scholarly context?
6. Do you believe that terms such as *manglings, selective quotation, and misrepresentative rephrasing* represent inappropriate language intensity?

7. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful and appropriate or unsuccessful and inappropriate according to the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense?
8. If you answered yes to Question 7, would you say, in general, that Brown's response is:
 - a. Successful and appropriate, or
 - b. Unsuccessful and inappropriate?

All of the editors believed that Harris's response reflected only the author's personal desire to save face, and none of them thought that his mention of compliments and awards is relevant to the scholarly exchange of information. None of them felt that an accusation such as *In their search for a Bogey Man against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme, they completely distort my original paper* is appropriate in this context, and none thought that verbs such as *attack*, *distort*, and *indict* are appropriate either.

None of the editors thought that terms such as *mean-spirited*, *school-yardish*, and *my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* are appropriate in a scholarly context. Two of the editors believed that terms such as *manglings*, *selective quotation*, and *misrepresentative rephrasing* represent inappropriate language intensity (the other editor did not answer the question).

When asked if they believed that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful and appropriate or unsuccessful and inappropriate according to the

presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense, two of the editors said yes. The other “was not sure how to answer,” stating that “‘purpose’ and ‘relevance’ seem key in judging response papers; the others seem minor, stylistic issues.” And in spite of the third editor’s uncertainty regarding Question 7, all editors found Harris’s response, in general, unsuccessful and inappropriate.

STRUGGLES BETWEEN MULTIPLE GOALS

But in spite of the fact that the members of academic discourse communities can list general terms for appropriateness, and thus general guidelines for success, such terms and guidelines are not always clear or easy to adhere to for various reasons. One of these reasons is the sometime struggle between multiple goals. A simple definition of a discourse community is often, as Swales (1990) states, “utopian and oddly free of many of the tensions, discontinuities and conflicts in the sorts of talk and writing that go on everyday in the classrooms and departments of an actual university” (32). However, a closer look at some of the secondary goals and purposes involved in the communicative activities of these communities “unveils” some general causes of tension and division (*Genre Analysis*; Swales 32). Two general causes of such tension are (1) the need to balance personal face concerns with professional purposes and (2) the need to employ clear, objective critical methods.

Balancing Personal Face Concerns with Professional Purposes

In “Intellectual Discussion in the Academy as Situated Discourse,” Tracy and Baratz (1993) recognize that there are competing goals in scholarly interaction and

sometimes scholars, having an ideal purpose in mind, “presume face goals to be of limited importance” (302). However, they are, I believe, somewhat extreme in their own views on the subject, stating the following:

We disagree with characterizations of intellectual discussion that imply that face concerns are, or should be, minimal and secondary. We think it unlikely for interaction to occur where face concerns are not salient; we also think it would be undesirable if peoples’ talk actually reflected no face concerns. (302)

Yet most of the academic subjects in Tracy and Baratz’s study agree that while face concerns are sometimes not minimal and secondary, they *should be* as much as possible, so that the primary purpose of the discussion (the exchange of knowledge) may be fulfilled for the greater benefit of all concerned. Furthermore, readers of scholarly response papers participating in the current study made the following remarks on the subject:

- Emotional baggage obscures the facts. Whenever I write a paper—especially a response to criticism of one of my articles or books—I always go over it carefully to weed out any hint of emotional overlay. I want the facts to speak for themselves.
- I think intellectual exchange is valuable and important, and incivility works against such exchange.
- From a strictly rhetorical perspective, I am most inclined to read, consider, and take seriously arguments that focus on the merits of the opposition’s position. I am unlikely to be receptive to ad hominem arguments.
- People will always be able to interpret different ways. A difference in interpretation, if both are supportable, does not constitute ineptitude on either side. When arguing becomes fighting, someone is generally trying to conceal something.
- Unnecessarily harsh tactics and/or so-called “below the belt” attacks (ad hominem) can, I’ve found, obscure genuine debate about contested ideas beneath defensiveness (on the parts of either author or respondent) and thus rob the exchange of any progress or fruitfulness. (For a complete accounting of statements made by reader participants in this study, see Appendix E, Table E.1.)

And face concerns are less pressing in the scholarly response paper than in the face-to-face discussions that Tracy and Baratz observed. Variables like personal status are less central since there is greater distance and anonymity in a written genre and less stress on an immediate defense of ideas. Thus while face concerns are present in scholarly response papers, and communication devoid of face concerns—without a degree of interest and passion that stems from personal involvement—would indeed be thin and incomplete, writers of scholarly response papers, like communicators in other genres, must still strike a balance between personal and professional goals.

For example, although the subjects in Tracy and Baratz's study agreed that the purpose of the colloquium was to provide an "opportunity" for the exchange of ideas, both those presenting and commenting on these ideas were concerned about appearing "intellectually competent" (306). At the same time, participants wanted to make sure they appeared competent without seeming to behave in "show-off" or "ego-oriented" ways (307). As Tracy and Baratz state, combining such concerns suggests "that the central face concern of participants was to be seen intellectually able without being seen to be a show-off" (307). Such a concern clearly illustrates a struggle to protect certain personal interests without compromising professional interaction:

Discussion participants wanted to display intellectual competence while avoiding being seen as egotistical. They pursued this face concern while orienting to the institutional goals of advancing ideas and cultivating community. In doing so participants faced a dilemma, one that was most keenly experienced when they formulated comments and questions to be addressed by the presenter. In a nutshell the dilemma was this: a fierce pursuit of another's claim could be seen as supporting intellectual standards and the group goal of advancing ideas, or it could be seen as self-aggrandizing intellectual display. Gentle, non-threatening questioning could display a commitment to community and a concern to not threaten another's face, or it could be taken as letting poor scholarship go by and/or evidencing intellectual limitations of one party or another party. (308)

Comments made by scholar participants in the current study reflected this same sort of problem. For example, one scholar noted that it may be difficult to avoid what could be considered “aspersions on one’s professional ability” as this is “sometimes germane to the ability to make an argument”:

I think is difficult to separate scholarly competence from professional ability.
But dispassionate evaluation is necessary for the respondent to have credibility.

As we see, balancing multiple goals is often an interactive dilemma. But finding a balance between personal face concerns such as intellectual competence and the overall purpose of critical discussion is extremely important. As the subjects in Tracy and Baratz’s study communicated, face concerns should not be “inoperative” but should be “achieved in a way that does not call into question a person’s commitment to the group’s goals. Hence when the group’s goals are accomplished, individual face concerns are unmarked and less visible” (312). Participants who are perceived as being more concerned with self and ego, as show-offs, are less likely, in compromising group intellectual goals, to establish or retain the professional scholarly credibility which assures them respected intellectual membership in the community.

Employing clear, objective critical methods

Employing the kind of criticism which most members of the community would consider clearly professional and objective can be difficult as well. One reason for this is that the term *criticism* has both positive and negative implications. Criticism can be positive because, through criticism, academics are able to reevaluate and reshape their thinking and thus discover truth (hence the term *constructive criticism*). One subject in the Tracy and Baratz study even suggested that criticism often “means that you are

respected and taken seriously; it is a sign that your interlocutor sees you as intellectually able” (309).

However, criticism can be negative if used for other, less professional or noble, purposes. Criticism may be negative, for example, when it is used to attack another scholar’s character for the purpose of making oneself look “smarter.” Thus subjects in Tracy and Baratz’s (1993) study also voiced various concerns about being “too nice” because too much “niceness” may suggest that the person being criticized “has limited ability” or that the person offering criticism “lets poor scholarship slip by unchecked” (310). On the other hand, being “too attacking” or going overboard with criticism may reflect badly on the participant as well (310). An example of this is reflected in Nicholas Rand’s (1991) secondary response to John Baker, who calls Rand’s original article “a bald and unconscionable affront to any Jewish intellectual who does not share the conclusions Rand has reached” and “unqualified ideological babble” (Baker 129):

Scholars are free to question the appropriateness of my concern. Yet calling my expression of that concern “unqualified ideological babble” is perhaps not intended to engage one’s opponent in critically stringent discussion. (129)

Baker’s use of such intense, even insulting, language, has obviously done little to promote an open critical exchange or to contribute to the exchange of information, and only resulted in personal offense.

Then there is the difficulty of criticizing an *idea* without lapsing into inappropriate personal criticism of the *author* of the idea. This is not always an easy task, especially when a participant has developed too much personal investment in the discussion. As Tracy and Muller (1994) state,

Intellectual discussion requires disagreement and criticism; discussion is not intellectual without these features. Yet at the same time, criticism of an idea

carries a potential to destroy the discussion by hurting and wounding the person who offered the idea. (338)

This is not, however, the potential I am concerned with in the current study, as hurt feelings, resulting from *any* criticism, even appropriate, are unavoidable in many cases. When I speak of personal criticism, here and elsewhere, being largely inappropriate, I refer to attacks on a scholar's professional character or his conduct as an individual within an academic profession, attacks which are recognizable to readers as such. But I will argue here and elsewhere in this study that personal criticism, by the preceding definition, does indeed carry the potential to destroy the intellectual discussion that scholarly response papers represent by moving the focus away from professional purpose to personal agenda. And this sort of inappropriate behavior is easier to spot, I would argue, in a written genre like the scholarly response paper as opposed to colloquium discussions presented in Tracy and Baratz (1993) and Tracy and Muller (1994) studies; many things which are either covered by positive body language (like a smile) or dimmed in force by memory remain stark and fresh on the page.

Besides destroying intellectual exchange, writers who respond inappropriately risk, to some degree, negative identity attribution. In the scholarly response paper, one major risk would be to the respondent's professional credibility. In Tracy and Baratz's (1993) study, the authors found that such negative attributions hardly ever resulted from a single talk exchange; the speaker would have to repeat the inappropriate behavior several times to receive substantial negative attention (313). This is true in terms of the scholarly response as well, although the terms of exchange are slightly different in this written genre. For example, the success or non-success of a response as well as the

professional credibility of the respondent, is unlikely to hinge on a single inappropriate comment, although several inappropriate comments may have this result.

But to be fair, the readers making such assessments may not be completely objective, and they make similar assessments which vary in degree. Tracy and Baratz (1993) found this to be true in their study, remarking that,

Participants can walk away from a discussion holding quite different assessments of each other's intellectual ability and "egoism." This is likely because the grounds on which intellectual and egoism assessments are made, rest on judgments that are socially constituted ("toughness," "fairness," "adequacy") and tied only loosely to objective criteria. (314)

Such a statement would be less true, I believe, when viewed in terms of the scholarly response paper. Readers of responses are more likely to remain objective because, unlike the subjects in Tracy and Baratz's study, they usually are not close acquaintances, may not know each other personally, and so lack the background for extreme subjectivity. However, in surveying readers for the current study, I did find some readers who felt they could not comment objectively on certain response papers. For example, regarding the Mester/Hairston exchange in Chapter Seven, one reader stated:

I can't read this outside a broader context. This became a major national scandal, one initiated by Hairston. She also made a scene at CCCC by coming to a panel meant to discuss this and disrupting it. In addition, Mester's reply follows others. I simply cannot read any of this without that context, and it makes me read very differently than I might had I not been aware of all this.

I found this type of subjectivity to be rare, though, regarding response papers in general. This is because the readers of response papers are not often involved in the same sort of face-to-face subjectivity that is often the result of speech activities.

But in any case, respondents can avoid the threat of reader subjectivity if they work to improve their own objectivity. Tracy and Muller report that academics involved in

talk exchanges do not always support their stands on appropriateness through marked speech, such as offering an apology “for long-windedness or potential ignorance (e.g. *I’m not an expert on this but*)” or offering “alternative framings of an act (*I don’t want you to see this as attacking or hostile; I’d just like to get a better handle on the issue*)” (343). Yet examples of such marked speech are more common in scholarly response paper, perhaps because writers have the time to frame their remarks and construct their criticism much more carefully. Furthermore, respondents who choose to frame all or part of their criticism in such ways tend to be more likely to be regarded as credible scholars using appropriate methods to achieve the purpose of the response, as will be shown in later chapters.

HOW THE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE PAPER GENRE AFFECTS AND INVOLVES THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENT

We have seen in this chapter that writing successfully within the context of a specific genre, like the scholarly response paper, depends largely upon knowledge of purpose, particular registers and notions of appropriateness. We also began to explore why it is sometimes difficult for writers in the academic discourse community, and thus writers of scholarly response papers, to produce successful writing in spite of such knowledge. This section, then, is a more in-depth discussion of (1) why it is such a challenge for the individual writer, particularly the individual writer of the scholarly response paper, to produce successful, professional criticism and (2) what an unsuccessful response may cost the response writer in terms of professional credibility.

RATIONALE FOR INAPPROPRIATE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE PAPERS

The General Argument Culture

In her new book *The Argument Culture: Moving From Debate to Dialogue* (1998), popular sociolinguist Deborah Tannen has coined the term **argument culture** to describe not, as she puts it, simple “civility” or “politeness,” but “a pervasive warlike atmosphere that makes us approach public dialogue, and just about anything we need to accomplish, as if it were a fight” (3):

It is a tendency in Western culture in general, and in the United States in particular, that has a long history and a deep, thick, and far-ranging root system. It has served us well in many ways but in recent years has become so exaggerated that it is getting in the way of solving our problems. Our spirits are corroded by living in an atmosphere of unrelenting contention—an argument culture. (3)

Proof of this, as Tannen points out, lies first in the assumption that opposition, attack, debate, and litigation are the best ways to solve problems. And in making such an assumption, a culture comes to value aggressive tactics for their own sake, not their usefulness or worth in specific situations. Tannen offers a very telling example of this:

A woman called in to a talk show on which I was a guest to say, “When I’m in a place where a man is smoking, and there’s a no-smoking sign, instead of saying to him ‘You aren’t allowed to smoke in here. Put that out,’ I say, ‘I’m awfully sorry, but I have asthma, so your smoking makes it hard for me to breathe. Would you mind terribly not smoking?’ Whenever I say this, the man is extremely polite and solicitous, and he puts his cigarette out, and I say, ‘Oh, thank you, thank you!’ as if he’s done a wonderful thing for me. Why do I do that?”

I think this woman expected me to say that she needs assertiveness training to learn to confront smokers in a more aggressive manner. Instead, I told her that there was nothing wrong with her style of getting the man to stop smoking. She gave him a face-saving way of doing what she asked, one that allowed him to feel chivalrous rather than chastised. This is kind to him, but it is also kind to herself, since it is more likely to lead to the other result that she desires. If she tried to alter his behavior by reminding him of the rules, he might well rebel: “Who made you the enforcer? Mind your own business!” . . .

Although another caller disagreed with Tannen, saying the first caller's style was unnecessarily "self-abasing," Tannen holds that "here is nothing necessarily destructive about conventional self-effacement" since all human relations "require us to find ways to get what we want from others without seeming to dominate them. . . . Allowing others to feel that they are doing what you want for a reason less humiliating to them fulfills this need" (22-23).

Other evidence of the argument culture lies in the tendency, when searching for answers and solutions, to constantly bipolarize, or "take sides," even when there are no clear-cut divisions or black and white answers. "Opposition does not lead to truth," Tannen points out, "when an issue is not composed of two opposing sides but is a crystal of many sides. Often the truth is in the complex middle, not the oversimplified extremes" (10).

And while she readily admits that "passionate opposition" and "strong verbal attack" are sometimes necessary and called for, such as in the fight against "repressive regimes that forbid public opposition," she questions the automatic use of agonism, pointing out the distinction between opposition and agonism:

I use this term, which derives from the Greek word for "contest," *agonia*, to mean an automatic warlike stance—not the literal opposition of fighting against an attacker or the unavoidable opposition that arises organically in response to conflicting ideas or actions. An agonistic response, to me, is a kind of programmed contentiousness—a prepatterned, unthinking use of fighting to accomplish goals that do not necessarily require it. (8)

In this way, Tannen, having conducted much research in the area of interpersonal communication, suggests that as communicators, many of our goals could be accomplished through other, better means such as "exploring, expanding, discussing, investigating, and the exchanging of ideas suggested by the word 'dialogue'" (8).

The Argument Culture in Academia

In conducting this study, I found what Tannen has to say about the general argument culture extremely applicable to the academic sub-culture. Even though academia has been traditionally (if sometimes too idealistically) been considered since its beginnings in the Middle Ages a place where objective, institutionalized argument, not agonism, holds sway for the purpose of higher learning, the greater culture has seeped in from the outside.

For example, Tannen reports that within academia, “the assumption that challenge and attack are the best modes of scholarly inquiry is pervasive” (266). Why is this? One reason is that attacking another scholar in print (particularly a well-known scholar) has become a recognized, if sometimes only grudgingly tolerated, stepping stone to the professional attention and publication record required for promotion and tenure in some academic fields. Thus to some extent, publishing an attack on another scholar has become part of a publish-or-perish mentality. One scholar participating in the current study had this to say on the subject:

Often attacks get attention and gain notoriety for scholars. Many seem to believe *any* attention is good. I find it disturbing that scholars often begin or offer their own work by opposing themselves to others. This is a convention of scholarship, but I don’t necessarily like it, and find I have little patience for unnecessarily mean attacks.

And another scholar participant noted that in spite of any negative affects an attack might have on its author, “perhaps controversy of any sort, with its impact on name recognition” might “affect the scholar’s career *favorably*.”

Tannen reports a particular situation where a leading psychologist was attacked by two younger colleagues in print for the purpose of achieving tenure. One of these admitted to the psychologist that “he actually agreed with him, but of course he could

not get tenure by writing articles simply supporting someone else's work; he had to stake out a position in opposition" (269). Thus, sadly, the younger scholar's real purpose had little to do with the exchange of any pertinent information but was almost completely self-serving to the point of using a legitimate scholar and his professional contribution as a foil. This technique is also popular because, unlike constructing one's own major research article, for example, it is relatively easy to do. As Tannen points out, attacking someone else's ideas has particular appeal because,

It demonstrates originality and independence of thought without requiring true innovation. After all, the domain of inquiry and the terms of debate have already been established. The critic has only to say, like the child who wants to pick a fight "Is not!" (269)

Moreover, it is also easier to criticize what was not studied or researched than to conduct well-thought discussion on the scope and focus of the subject at hand; and since even the most thorough studies must have boundaries, something is always left out.

Another reason that challenge and attack have become popular modes of inquiry in academia seems to be explained by the old adage, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." In other words, in the competitive world of academic finances, departmental budgets, etc., directing attention toward the research going on in one's own field may be financially beneficial; thus often any attention is good attention. This kind of pressure has seemed to have some affect on academia in general, increasing the professional tensions that exist to some degree in all discourse communities.

But writing in terms of opposition can actually create needless opposition that serves no real purpose. Take for example *Lingua Franca*, a magazine for college professors:

By reporting on battles, the magazine also foments them. Someone who was party to such a battle commented, "There is a way in which certain *Lingua*

Franca accounts of academic debates needlessly polarize academic communities and generate more division than exists.” (Tannen 29)

And there are plenty of other published debates which are polarized as well, a prime example being *some* scholarly responses papers within the English academic discourse community.

While some members of the academic discourse community either accept static or destructive opposition and needlessly polarized debate, or view it from the sidelines as harmless entertainment, scholars are increasingly speaking out against it. Take for example readers of scholarly response papers, *PMLA* readers in particular. In the process of examining response papers published in this journal, I found that many readers were tired of empty debate and attack and ready for a more productive form of respondent discussion. This readiness is reflected in a statement by *PMLA* secondary respondent Melba Cuddy-Keane (1991): “I try to be guided by two principles: to sound the note of critical exchange rather than the note of critical attack and to advance a strong interpretation without setting it up as the final word on the subject” (124).

Again, it is perhaps the outside influence of the greater argument culture which has affected academic discourse communities, causing a sort of corruption to the Socratic method of inquiry which is at the foundation of higher education. Both Tannen (1998) and Moulton (1983) point out that although we have come to view the Socratic method as a means of “systematically leading an opponent into admitting error,” it was originally framed as a give-and-take dialogue “designed to convince others, to shake them out of their habitual mode of thought and lead them to new insight” (274). This was also a method which encouraged all members to participate in the striving toward a greater goal.

Such participation may be lost when readers and writers are repulsed, defamed, or intimidated by interchanges wherein we cannot distinguish between what Blair (1986) terms a *dispute* (each side aims to win over the other and has no intention of making concessions) and an *argumentative discussion* (participants advance arguments in an effort to add knowledge to knowledge to produce a better understanding of a given concept) (192). Mary Lefkowitz, author of the controversial text *Not Out of Africa* decries the need to intellectually intimidate and/or personally abuse fellow scholars simply to protect academic turf ("In Wars of Words" 1998). "As educators," insists Lefkowitz, "we ought to want people to learn something from our controversies, and, if at all possible, to educate each other, so that our discussions progress to some better mutual understanding" (A64).

Thus many academics are already realizing the need for better, more respectful, modes of argument in many genres including the scholarly response paper, though these modes have not yet been fully implemented. And it may still be difficult to implement these in spite of growing professional dissatisfaction due to the powerful influence of external and internal argument cultures. However, there are also more specific, individual factors which may affect a respondent's behavior and which are discussed in the next section.

Face and Identity Work: Balancing Personal and Professional Concerns

There are several factors which may influence how discourse participants balance their personal and professional concerns. One of these is ethnicity; for example, some studies show that members of certain Asian cultures are less likely, in public contexts, to display the kind of individual forwardness associated with members of Western

cultures (Jones, et al. 1995). Another factor is sex; for example, some studies have pointed out that women tend to be more “tactful” in arguments, especially given that they are often conditioned by society to put more emphasis on community than on self. In one study of critical e-mail exchanges, Herring (1996) found that women were much less likely than men to practice **flaming**, or vicious verbal attacks on other participants.

Undoubtedly ethnicity and sex have some affect on scholar response writers, as they do in other areas of academic life (see, for example, Jones, et al.’s “Language and Power in an Academic Context: The Effects of Status, Ethnicity, and Sex” 1995). However, these variables do not factor strongly in the current (broad) study of the scholarly response paper. Instead, I have chosen to focus on the most general, universal factors that affect a respondent’s ability to balance personal and professional concerns, factors which tend to transcend ethnicity or sex. These factors are face and identity.

The theory of **face** (Brown and Levinson 1978) has two parts which explain the ways in which discourse participants “will attempt to maintain two components of their public image” (“Telling More”; Riley 186):

1. **Negative Face**, the desire to be unimpeded by others
2. **Positive Face**, the desire to be approved of and admired by others

In simpler terms, as Riley states, “negative face reflects a desire for individual autonomy, while positive face reflects a desire for group acceptance” (186).

Not a new theory by any means, Brown and Levinson’s theory of face has remained a popular starting point for studies which examine how members of various discourse communities balance personal and professional concerns in an effort to achieve communication the group deems both appropriate and successful (so much so that the authors published a second edition of *Politeness* in 1987).

However, it is worth noting here that a number of critics disagree with Brown and Levinson for a variety of reasons; for example, failure to include “paralinguistic or other non-verbal behavior” in their model (Buck 4). Of course, this type of argument doesn’t affect the current study, as it concerns written, not spoken, communication. Moreover, those who disagree (Meier 1995; Kwarciak 1993; Nwoye 1992) generally do so because they feel that Brown and Levinson’s theories do not apply universally, or in the same manner, order, and degree in all cultures. Those who do agree with Brown and Levinson’s theories (Holtgraves and Yang 1990) believe that they do apply universally, but with slightly different constraints in any given culture. For example, all cultures have face-threatening behaviors, though these behaviors are not the same in all cultures. And Brown and Levinson themselves say that “our strategies were never intended as an exhaustive taxonomy of utterance styles, but rather as an open-ended set of procedures for message construction” (*Politeness*; Brown and Levinson 21).

I am not overly concerned, then, with the criticism of Brown and Levinson for several reasons. First, my study does not concern a potentially problematic foreign culture but the English-speaking Western culture Brown and Levinson based their study on in the first place. Second, the general premise of the theory of face and a discussion of face-threatening acts, like the preceding discussion of a larger and a more specific (academic) argument culture, is an important part of beginning to understand why scholars sometimes produce unsuccessful scholarly response papers.

Studies involving face and facework sometimes use alternate terms such as **identity** and **identity work**, thus these terms will also be used in the current study. Researchers like Tracy and Naughton (1994) prefer identity and identity work to face and facework

because they feel these are less abstract and more context-specific, the term “identity” giving a “moral and emotional seriousness to the situated self” (283):

While Brown and Levinson recognize that there will be cultural variations in how these [face] wants are expressed, the concerns are formulated as universal ones that are relevant to all people in all situations. We do not see this claim as an unreasonable characterization of people’s situational concerns; we do see it as unhelpful. People’s situated identity concerns are more particular and contextualized than positive and negative face. Thus our final reason for adopting the concept identity is because it encourages formulations of persons’ concerns in situationally sensitive manners. (283)

The face/identity concerns of speakers in various academic and non-academic situations—addressed in studies such as Tracy and Carjuzáa (1993) and Kline (1987)—are similar to those of writers of scholarly response papers. These may be summarized as: the need to protect status, the need to protect intellect, the need to promote intellect, and the need to defend ego-involvement.

The Need to Protect Status

This need applies to both primary and secondary respondents. It may be activated if respondents feel they are not being shown enough respect or consideration or if they feel other participants are ignoring their contributions or not granting enough “legitimacy” to their views (Kline 241). Such needs are even more likely to be held by scholars who have made significant achievements or hold positions of power in their fields, and thus view criticism as a greater threat to their professional status. Moreover, as Lefkowitz (1998) points out, since all academics are accustomed to having some degree of power in the classroom, criticism may be even more of a threat to professional status: “Because academics are used to overseeing the discussions in their classrooms, nothing seems to pain them so much as having their opinions contradicted” (A64).

The Need to Protect Intellect

This need applies primarily to secondary respondents. In this case, secondary respondents may feel that primary respondents, in challenging the intellectual work behind their original articles, have to some degree “belittled their powers of reasoning or depreciated their self-worth” (Kline 241). Also, these respondents may feel that if they accept any criticism at all, even constructively, they will appear weak or inconsistent. Although this is not true—given that compromise is often the goal of an intellectual exchange—this need is not necessarily irrational given that it stems from the general view that people who do not behave consistently are “emotionally unstable, unreliable, and lacking in credibility” (Kline 242). Some secondary respondents, then, may feel driven to employ an aggressive defense in the hopes of avoiding such a characterization.

The Need to Promote Intellect

The need to promote intellect, responding solely for that purpose, applies primarily to primary respondents. These respondents are driven to use another scholar’s research as a forum for promoting their own positions, theoretical and literal, in the field. Although this need may be calculated, it may also be complicated by more noble goals. Tannen points to this need as the foundation of some critical attacks by younger, or less prominent, scholars who may “work [themselves] into passionate convictions” in convincing themselves that “they are fighting for the truth, that they are among the few who see that the emperor has no clothes” (270).

The Need to Defend Ego-Involvement

This need applies to both primary and secondary respondents. Similar to needs based on status and intellect, respondents find themselves so bound up with an idea or a theory, that any criticism of it is a personal insult. As Tracy and Carjuzáa (1993) point out, the more experienced and seasoned a scholar becomes, the closer the tie between conceptions of work and self (176). Therefore this need would apply most often to experienced scholars.

Needs and Emotions

Face/identity concerns are generally accompanied, to some degree, by the following emotions: anger, resentment, defensiveness, and fear/panic. While these needs and emotions are not invalid, they must be checked and balanced if a successful, professional exchange of information is going to take place. And this is not always easy given that the speech acts used in the response context—such as disagreeing, criticizing, disapproving, requesting, advising, offering, etc.—are “intrinsically face-threatening” (Kline 241). For example, sometimes a secondary respondent will produce an unsuccessful response, partly due to having been angered by the tone of the primary respondent (this is true in the case of the Harris response analyzed in this and other chapters). While the anger of the secondary respondent is understandable in the case, at least on one level, it is still unacceptable for him to respond in kind since he is still unlikely to advance his case with such behavior: two wrongs seldom make a right. This is one reason why the subject of tone, as it concerns the behavior of secondary respondents, was not a large part of the current discussion. Every effort was made in this study to analyze responses as individual documents, on their own merit. However,

because tone has such a strong potential influence on the behavior of secondary respondents, I have noted in the Chapter Eight summary that it is an area which will require more scrutiny in any expansion of this study.

It is also difficult to achieve balance when the respondent is in effect dealing with two audiences, (1) his critic(s) and (2) the readers who are indirect participants in the exchange and who will pass judgment on his actions with greater and lesser effects. This may be defined as a **multiple audience problem**, and as Fleming, et al. (1990) explain, speakers and writers “must be (realistically) concerned that their behavior, constrained by the presence of one audience, will result in unfortunate or undesirable judgments being made about them by another audience” (594).

However, it *is* possible to achieve an effective balance, and some strategies for doing so will be proposed in the final chapter of this study, “Conclusions and Recommendations.” The next section, though, explores what affect the failure to achieve such balance may have on respondents’ credibility.

COSTS IN TERMS OF CREDIBILITY

General Notions of Source Credibility

When we speak of determining source or communicator credibility, we are generally referring to *perceived* credibility; in simple terms, does the source demonstrate through knowledge, behavior, presentation, etc., that he is worthy of respect, trust, and admiration. Because we cannot read minds, we must rely in part on external signs. As Delia (1976) states,

Our understanding of other people is always in terms of images or impressions. The other is never a reflected reality. We can never directly apprehend another’s intentions, inner qualities or attitudes. Rather, in interpersonal perception the individual constructs an impression of the actions, qualities, or

attitudes of the other through interpreting aspects of the other's appearance and behavior within particular cognitive dimensions. (367)

For example, imagine a secondary respondent who feels he has been personally and unfairly maligned by a primary respondent and is furious. He submits a response which is dripping invective aimed at his critic. Several readers find it "out of control" and express disappointment that someone so valued in the field could be unprofessional enough to throw such a "tantrum." Some readers even say that they find it difficult to respect the position of someone so volatile. Thus whether or not the *primary* respondent was truly at fault or suffered loss of credibility for his actions, the secondary respondent is still subject to loss of his own credibility. Two wrongs don't make a right, or keep credibility intact.

The preceding example is too sketchy to accurately illustrate the complexities of credibility judgments (hopefully this is better accomplished in Chapters Three-Seven), but more than three decades worth of credibility studies have proved through scientific means what we already knew to be a general truth of human relations. To quote Arndt and Janney (1979), "Whenever information is given or received, the perceived credibility of the source obviously affects how the information will be decoded by the listener" thus it plays "an important role in attitude and belief modification" (2).

Still, these studies (e.g. McLaughlin 1975; Liska 1978; Pryor and Buchanan 1984; Fleming, et al. 1990) show that perceptions of credibility are indeed complicated and subject to change due to the influence of context and other variables. For instance, some political aspirants may seem credible to a given audience not simply because they appear to be honest and have good ideas, but because they recognize a particular party affiliation (McLaughlin 226-227). And for the witnesses and defendants in any kind of

criminal investigation, failure to make eye contact—even due to shyness—may make that person appear guilty, and thus less credible, in the eyes of the jury (Pryor and Buchanan 93).

The most common variables which influence the perceived credibility of speakers and writers are honesty, expertness, and dynamism/charisma (McLaughlin 1975; Delia 1976; Liska 1978). However, credibility is also often affected by the speaker/writer's social status, position to audience (peer, spouse, teacher, etc.), and the context of the communication (public, private, or professionally-linked forums) (Delia 1976; Arndt and Janney 1979). Finally, there is evidence that credibility may be linked to factors over which the speaker has no control (i.e. race, gender, appearance similar/not similar to audience) and projected attitudes and positions (happy, sad, humorous, hard; positive-negative, believing-unbelieving, articulate-inarticulate, overt-covert, sharp-dull, complex-simple; opinions similar/not similar to audience) (Liska 1978; Arndt and Janney 1979).

Notions of Respondent Credibility

In regard to the written genre of the scholarly response paper, common factors like honesty and expertness, as well as projected attitudes such as positive-negative, are obviously of greater importance than race and gender. As stated earlier in this chapter, as part of the research for the current study, 14 readers and three journal editors were asked the following two-part question:

1. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful or unsuccessful according whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue? **YES / NO**

If so, do you believe that the success or non-success of such dialogue can be affected by the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense? **YES / NO**

All 17 readers and editors replied “yes” to this question. Then respondents were asked the following questions:

2. If you answered **YES** to the preceding questions, do you believe that an unsuccessful scholarly response paper can *to some degree* affect a scholar’s credibility among his peers? **YES / NO**
3. If so, does this lack of credibility have the *potential* to affect that scholar’s (circle all that apply): (a) future publication, (b) job promotion, (c) peer standing, (d) none of the above.

Again, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Two of the three editors and all 14 readers agreed that an unsuccessful scholarly response paper can to some degree affect a scholar’s credibility among his peers (the third editor did not respond to the question). Furthermore, just over half of the 17 readers and editors (nine out of 17) agreed that lack of credibility has the potential to affect a scholar’s future publication; over a third (six out of 17) thought that lack of credibility would affect job promotion; and over three-quarters (15 out of 17) thought that lack of credibility could have an affect on peer standing. Thus while lack of credibility has a significant potential negative affect on future publication, job promotion, and peer standing, it has the greatest potential affect on peer standing, a variable which may in some cases indirectly affect future publication and job promotion. (see Appendices E and F for a complete account of responses to these questions).

CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

As in the case of all genres and discourse communities, the scholarly response paper has a particular function and purpose within the English academic discourse community. Although scholarly response papers differ in terms of prototypicality (length, organization, etc.) and slightly in purpose (primary vs. secondary responses), most members of the discourse community seem to agree that the primary purpose of the response is to promote the scholarly exchange of information.

And as in all genres, respondents must adhere to a certain register and certain terms of appropriateness in order to construct a successful scholarly response paper, one which fulfills its purpose. To do so, almost three-quarters of readers and editors recommend avoiding (a) statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face; over three-quarters recommend avoiding (b) accusations which cannot be proved or supported; over one-half recommend avoiding (c) verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious; over three-quarters recommend avoiding (d) language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context which is potentially harmful to the response; and over three-quarters recommend avoiding (e) disproportionate language intensity.

Still, constructing a response which employs constructive criticisms, and balancing personal and professional goals in order to do so, is not always an easy task. Respondents must not only navigate the pressures of external and internal argument cultures, but must also manage face and identity concerns (e.g. the need to protect status and intellect) as well. Respondents who do not manage these concerns well, producing

unsuccessful scholarly response papers, may in turn lose professional credibility (all readers and editors thought this was the case) which may adversely affect future publication (more than half of readers and editors thought this was the case); job promotion (over one-third of readers and editors thought this was the case); and, most importantly, peer standing (more than three-quarters of readers and editors thought this was the case).

In the chapter outlines which follow, I list the questions addressed in each chapter as well as the means and information used to answer or begin to answer each. Specific findings and detailed interpretations, however, have been reserved for the summary of each chapter and then compiled in the Chapter Eight summary of the study as a whole.

FUTURE CHAPTER OUTLINES

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter, having established that scholarly response papers *can* be reasonably termed successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not they support professional scholarly dialogue, I address the second part of question two:

2. By what formal methods or theories can one determine whether or not a scholarly response paper is appropriate or inappropriate, successful or unsuccessful?

The goal of this chapter was to take findings from Chapter One and find formal theories/rules/studies which explained and supported such findings within the context of the scholarly response paper. For example, many readers providing feedback for this study felt that statements relevant to the response exchange **ONLY** in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and

awards from other quarters) threaten the scholarly exchange of information and thus should be avoided. Therefore, I decided to examine adherence to Grice's Maxims (in this case, the Maxim of Relation) as a means of determining response success. A complete list of the theories/rules/studies I discuss in Chapter Two is as follows:

- The Co-Operative Principle and the Conversational Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner
- Studies of semantic (denotative and evaluative) verb force
- Lakoff's Rules of Politeness
- Studies of language intensity

After discussing these, I apply them in particular ways to the scholarly response paper in a sample analysis. Then I use the results of this brief analysis to predict the usefulness of these theories/rules/studies in determining the success of responses analyzed in Chapters Three-Seven.

This chapter also provides important information concerning the responses chosen for analysis, the journals and discourse communities which produced these, and how these analyses are conducted in Chapters Three-Seven.

In my original seminar paper, I analyzed random responses from various linguistic, language, and writing journals, including Morton's "Response to Hunter" (*Publications of the Modern Language Association* 1996); Harris's "A Response to K. Scott Ferguson and Frank Parker's 'Grammar and Technical Writing'" (*Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 1992); and Frawley's "In Defense of the Dictionary: A Response to Haiman" (*Lingua* 1981). This study establishes a more narrow focus. I did retain part of my original topic (responses within the liberal arts) because written responses

are less common in the sciences. As Myers states of scientific writing in *Writing Biology* (1990), “The usual method of dealing with research claims one thinks are wrong is to ignore them; if they are not picked up by anyone, they will disappear into the morass of scientific publications” (101).

I narrowed my focus by choosing a test group of specific liberal arts journals, consisting of two writing journals (*Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* and *College Composition and Communication*); one linguistics journal (*Applied Linguistics*); one major literary research journal (*Publications of the Modern Language Association*); and a smaller literary research journal which publishes articles in one specific area (*Early American Literature*).

The rationale behind establishing such a test group was to allow me to find out (or begin to find out) whether differences between the ways responses are framed among different disciplines/sub-cultures in the same field had any significant bearing on the perceived success of a response, hence, whether my methods could be used with greater or lesser success in these different areas.

Finally, this chapter also describes how statistical information concerning each journal and feedback from reader questionnaires will be used in the analyses of Chapters Three-Seven.

CHAPTERS THREE-SEVEN

These chapters are the logical extension of Chapter Two, as they apply the theories/rules/studies discussed in this preceding chapter in addressing the second part of question two,

2. By what formal methods or theories can one determine whether or not a scholarly response paper is appropriate or inappropriate, successful or unsuccessful?

Each chapter addresses responses taken from one of the five journals in this study (i.e. *Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *College Composition and Communication*, and *Publications of the Modern Language Association*). Findings are listed at the end of each chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In this final summary chapter, I discuss the extent to which I was able to answer the first three questions proposed earlier in the Introduction. I also discuss how my findings can be of use to writers and potential writers in terms of revising responses in order to produce more successful results.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter, having established that scholarly response papers *can* be reasonably termed successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not they support professional scholarly dialogue, is to suggest various means by which one may rule a scholarly response paper successful or unsuccessful in serving its purpose while assuring the respondent's scholarly credibility. At the same time, of course, terms such as *appropriate* and *inappropriate*, *successful* and *unsuccessful* are always in some sense subjective, reflecting the specific and often evolving demands of culture and context. Moreover, these sorts of terms may vary in degree; an unsuccessful response which uses one word out of turn is obviously more successful (or less unsuccessful as the case may be) than one which uses ten words out of turn.

Finally, there are factors or exceptions involving viewpoint and standing which may affect general perceptions of success and credibility; for example, readers may respond differently to some response exchanges if their judgements are colored by certain "background" knowledge concerning the debate, as will be seen in the some of the analyses in the following chapters. Also, the responsorial hijinks of well-known scholars and academics, such as the famous debates between men like Voltaire and Rousseau, will probably not be judged by the same standards because of the respondents' standing. And what seems glaringly inappropriate and non-credible to a more pragmatic technical writing community may seem only a touch tacky to a group of literary critics; one critic's opinion, though, may differ significantly from that of his

fellows if colored by personal and emotional identification with the scholarly response paper's author or themes (as observed in Chapter One).

Still, there are various linguistic, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic means which may help to determine, *in general*, whether an scholarly response paper is successful or unsuccessful, especially the following theories/rules/studies:

- The Co-operative Principle and the Conversational Maxims (Grice 1975; 1981)
- Studies of semantic (denotative and evaluative) verb force (Thompson and Yiyun 1991; Hunston 1993)
- Rules of Politeness (Lakoff 1973)
- Studies of language intensity (Bowers 1963; Aune and Toshiyuki 1993)

At first glance, it may seem odd to explore so many means of determining whether or not an scholarly response paper is appropriate and successful. However, I find it prudent to do so since my research (which includes readers' reactions to the Harris response) shows that one or more of these may be involved (broadly or narrowly) in such a determination. For example, as seen in Chapter One, all of the readers surveyed for this study found that one or more of the following elements could threaten the scholarly exchange of information and thus should be avoided:

- a. Statements relevant to the case **ONLY** in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).

- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being deliberately misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort, attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").

Hopefully, the link between these elements and an unsuccessful scholarly response paper will be better supported and explained by the more objective, formal theories/rules/studies discussed in this chapter.

Also, since very little scholarly research involves the scholarly response paper, a broad initial inquiry seems an efficient way to discover useful information. Thus this chapter defines all of the aforementioned theories/rules/studies in turn,

1. Pointing out whether or not they are to be applied broadly or narrowly to the scholarly response paper,
2. Discussing their application and noting the ways in which the phenomena they describe may overlap, and
3. Providing brief examples of their application which will pave the way for the more specific and stringent applications and analyses in Chapters Three-Seven.

THEORIES/RULES/STUDIES

To greater or lesser degrees, all of the theories/rules/studies discussed in this chapter are within the scope of **pragmatics** (even though some of the latter are partly grounded in classical semantics), roughly defined by Leech and Thomas (1990) as "the meaning

of linguistic utterances for their users and interpreters" (173). The first of these is Grice's (1975;1981) discussion of the Co-operative Principle and the Conversational Maxims.

THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

Definition

Much of Grice's work explores the connections between what is *said* and what is *meant*. "What is said" is what the speaker's words mean at face value, while "what is meant" is the effect that the speaker intends to produce on the hearer in light of the hearer's recognition of this intention (Leech and Thomas 179). Consider for example, the following exchange:

Husband: Uncle Chester is coming over for dinner tonight.

Wife: I guess I'd better lock up the liquor. (*Linguistics*; Parker and Riley 12)

Anyone overhearing this exchange would know that the wife's statement goes far beyond a future intent to lock up a liquor cabinet; her primary purpose is to imply, basically, one of two things: Uncle Chester likes alcohol too much (i.e. is an alcoholic or a heavy drinker) or not at all (i.e. is for some reason offended by alcohol, and thus courtesy dictates that the husband and wife abstain). Either way, we, like the husband, must "read between the lines" in order to construct this meaning since, if taken literally, the wife's reply seems totally unrelated to the husband's declaration. By reading between the lines to uncover the implied meaning, known henceforth as an **implicature**, we are cooperating with other speakers in recognizing certain linguistic rules or behaviors. Grice's **Co-operative Principle (CP)** attempts to explain these behaviors,

describing the way in which speakers and writers cooperate with one another in order to communicate clearly:

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Thus whether speakers obey the CP by saying exactly what they mean, or violate or **flout** (i.e. intentionally violate) it in order to create an implicature, some form of the CP must exist as a baseline before communication can take place.

The Conversational Maxims

There are four maxims which operate under the Co-operative Principle: **Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner**. Each maxim may be defined and explicated briefly in light of implicatures as follows:

Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality requires that speakers try to make their contributions ones that are true; specifically, speakers should not:

- (i) Say what they believe to be false.
- (ii) Say that for which they lack adequate evidence.

Student: *Reno's the capital of Nevada.*

Mr. Barbados (Instructor): *Yeah, and London's the capital of New Jersey.*

The student reasons (unconsciously) as follows: Mr. Barbados said that London is the capital of New Jersey; he knows that is not true. He appears to be flouting the Maxim of Quality; there must be a reason for him saying something patently false. The inference (i.e., the implicature) I draw is that my answer is false (i.e., Reno is not the capital of Nevada). (*Linguistics* 13-14)

Scholar A: *I've heard that Brown's new article on Chaos theory is quite good.*

Scholar B: *Nothing based on that theory could possibly be intelligent or useful.*

Scholar A reasons (unconsciously) as follows: my fellow scholar said that nothing based on Chaos theory could be good without even having read the article I mentioned. He appears to be flouting the Maxim of Quality; there must be a reason for him saying something for which he lacks adequate evidence. The inference (i.e., the implicature) I draw is that he does not agree with chaos theory to the point that he is completely close-minded where it is concerned.

Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity requires that speakers, for the purposes of the exchange,

- (i) Make their contributions as informative as are required.
- (ii) Do not make their contributions more informative than are required.

Kenny (to his roommate Tom): *What are you reading?*

Tom: *A book.*

Kenny reasons (unconsciously) as follows: I asked Tom what he was reading and the context of my question required him to tell me either the title of the book or at least its subject matter. Instead, he told me what I could already see for myself. He appears to be flouting the Maxim of Quantity; there must be a reason for him giving me less information than the situation requires. The inference (i.e. the implicature) that I draw is that he does not want to be disturbed (and is thus trying to terminate the conversation). (*Linguistics* 13-14)

Woman (in a grocery store check-out line): *How are you?*

Recent Acquaintance: *Well, the medication they've been giving me for the paranoia has been making me nauseous, and the whole situation has been really hard on my marriage lately.*

The woman reasons (unconsciously) as follows: I asked her how she was, and instead of giving me a response such as fine, which would be appropriate within the context of our relationship, she glibly gave me an answer which is only appropriate in a very intimate relationship. She appears to be flouting the Maxim of Quantity; there must be a reason for her giving me more information than the situation requires. The inference (i.e. the implicature) that I draw is that she is to some degree mentally or emotionally disturbed.

Maxim of Relation

The Maxim of Relation requires that speakers,

- (i) Make their contributions relevant.

Husband (after waking up in the morning): *What time is it?*

Wife: *Well, the paper's already come.*

The husband reasons (unconsciously) as follows: I asked about the time and she told me about something seemingly unrelated—the arrival of the newspaper.

She appears to be flouting the Maxim of Relation; there must be some reason for her seemingly irrelevant comment. The inference (i.e., the implicature) I draw is that she doesn't know the exact time but the arrival of the newspaper has something to do with the time, namely that is now past the time of day that the newspaper usually comes (i.e., 7:00 a.m.) (This example is adapted from Levinson [1983].)

Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner requires that speakers be perspicuous, and specifically,

- (i) avoid obscurity
- (ii) avoid ambiguity

- (iii) be brief
- (iv) be orderly (Grice 1975)

Mr. Jones (with his wife and small children on a Sunday drive): *Let's stop and get something to eat.*

Mrs. Jones: *Okay, but not M-c-D-o-n-a-l-d-s.*

Mr. Jones reasons (unconsciously) as follows: she spelled out the word McDonald's, which is certainly not the clearest way of saying it. She appears to be flouting the Maxim of Manner; there must be a reason for her lack of clarity. Since the kids cannot spell, the inference (i.e. the implicature) I draw is that she does not want the children to understand that part of her statement. (*Linguistics* 13-14)

As stated previously, speakers and writers may violate any of the preceding maxims intentionally or unintentionally, creating an implicature. The reasons for such violations are varied. One important reason for implicature is the need to communicate without being impolite; to be subtle. Cooper (1982) notes some others:

1. To mislead
2. To "opt out" of an uncomfortable conversation
3. To avoid violating another maxim
4. Ineptitude, negligence, and absentmindedness (112-113)

To these I would add anger, frustration, resentment, etc., strong emotions that the scholarly response paper writer would be particularly prone to and which stem from the face/identity concerns discussed in Chapter One.

Because Grice's Co-operative Principle and the conversational maxims have often been the focus of theoretical controversy among linguists, it is necessary to further explain the purpose and range of both before continuing on to discuss their application to the scholarly response paper. In this way, I can perhaps anticipate the more common questions that may arise concerning this application and avoid provoking some of the theoretical misunderstandings that other researchers and critics have fallen prey to.

Criticism of the CP and the Conversational Maxims

First of all, as Leech and Thomas (1990) point out,

Many commentators have assumed that Grice's Co-operative Principle is built on some *a priori* notion of human benevolence and co-operativeness; that Grice is therefore making some kind of ethical claim about human behavior (see, for example, Apostel 1980, Kasher 1976, 1977, Kiefer 1979, Pratt 1977, 1981 and Sampson 1982). But nothing is further from the truth. The CP is simply a device to explain how people arrive at meanings. There is certainly no assumption that people are inevitably truthful, informative and relevant in what they say. (181)

Green (1990) even adds that "there is nothing in Grice (1975) to suggest that he thought of them [the maxims] as statistical principles that people tend to conform to, or as ideals that people aspire to conform to. Rather, they are described as governing the communicative acts of *all* (sane) communicators" (414).

Thus speakers may infringe on the CP by accident, as Leech and Thomas point out (181); or they may violate it intentionally or unintentionally, either way creating implied meaning (a concept we will return to shortly); or they may even "opt out" of it by saying nothing. All kinds of talk, whether primarily cooperative or even uncharacteristically uncooperative, such as interrogation (Levinson 1979; 374) or social talk between enemies (Harnish 1979; 340) are still subject to the CP and to the maxims which operate under it.

Yet some writers have disagreed on whether Grice's maxims have been given too much or too little power, both individually and as a whole, within the confines of the CP. For example, Sadock (1978) worries that each maxim has been vested with too much power:

So powerful is each of the maxims that at times they vie for the privilege of explaining the same facts. It is not clear to me, for example, how one could both be relevant and say either less or more than is required. In what way is the avoidance of prolixity different from saying only as much as is required? If a particular contribution is obscure does it not also lack relevance? (285)

Then there are authors who privilege the content of one maxim as the basis of their own theories, as Sperber and Wilson (1986) do in their Principle of Relevance. According to this principle, it is simply relevance or a "trade-off between informativeness (cf. Grice's Maxim of Quantity) and possibility (cf. Grice's Maxim of Manner" which is the key to clarity in communication (Leech and Thomas 2003). The Maxim of Relation is also the key to the communicative theories of Naess (1966) who describes his tenets of "effective discussion" as advice against "forms of irrelevance in discussion," admonishing readers that "if we wish to influence people and not to convince them, suggestiveness, propaganda, and advertisement are generally more effective means than discussion" (121). Naess' tenets, which arguably touch on the Maxims of Quantity, Quality and Manner as well, may be summarized briefly as follows:

1. Keep to the point (even if you are aware that it harms your own interests to do so).
2. Make sure that an utterance in serious discussion that aims at rendering a point of view is neutral in relation to all points of view.

3. Try not to say anything which may cause any real risk of misunderstanding on the part of the hearer.
4. Do not give an account of another person's viewpoint without (a) saying whether the person in question is likely to accept the account or (b) bringing up the arguments one has for attributing to someone a view he himself says he does not hold.
5. Do not leave something out to lay emphasis on other things, or say anything which will convey a distorted impression to the hearer or give a directly false impression that serves the interests of the speaker.
6. Present all matters in a neutral way in a neutral setting. (122-132)

But ironically, as a whole, these criticisms and alternate theories tend to strengthen the argument for the power of the CP, not weaken it. Sadock doesn't reject the CP; he is simply frustrated by the overlap of the maxims. Sperber and Wilson are in one sense, privileging the Maxim of Relation, but in saying that their Principle of Relevance is a "trade-off between informativeness (cf. Grice's Maxim of Quantity) and possibility (cf. Grice's Maxim of Manner)" they are in fact recognizing the existence of other principles/maxims. And Naess' tenants, which predate Grice's articulation of his own theories, include the groundwork for the maxims—can one not equate the admonishment not to give "a directly false impression" with Grice's Maxim of Quality? Thus these scholars' differing contributions are further proof that the information contained in Grice's CP and Conversational Maxims is legitimate and functional.

The only real question remaining concerns the maxims: does the fact that they overlap tarnish their validity? In this, Green (1990) reminds us that "Grice intended a

broad rather than a narrow interpretation” of the CP and that “strictly speaking, the basis of implicature is the more general Co-operative Principle (CP) rather than the more specific maxims, which are neither culturally prescribed standards, nor mere customs, but more like default instantiations of the CP” (411). Green argues that the maxims were never intended as “an exhaustive list of special cases” (413). Thus the fact that the maxims overlap to occasionally explain the particular form of an implicature should not cause any real problem; the maxims are simply a catch-all.

STUDIES OF SEMANTIC (DENOTATIVE AND EVALUATIVE) VERB FORCE

Definition

Studies of semantic verb force take into account what a verb means (denotes) and how the reader is likely to interpret (evaluate) it, and balances these findings with studies of verb use in particular contexts. For example, in two recent articles, Thompson and Yiyun (1991) and Hunston (1993) examine the force of verbs in academic research articles. Summaries of the information in these articles which is pertinent to the current study are provided here.

“Evaluation In The Reporting Verbs Used In Academic Papers” (Thompson and Yiyun 1991)

This article attempts to identify and classify the kinds of verbs used in citations in academic papers in order to use this information to teach non-native-speaker students (NNSs) how to read and write these sorts of papers. Because they are often unfamiliar with various nuances of the English language, NNSs are more likely to (1) translate verbs incorrectly or (2) choose the wrong verb for a particular citation.

Thompson and Yiyun refer to citations as **reporting acts** and to the verbs used in these citations as **reporting verbs**; any verb recording a research act is a potential reporting

verb. And to avoid confusion, they refer to the writers of such citations as **reporting writers** or simply **writers** and to the subjects of the citations as **reported authors** or simply **authors**. For example, when Harris states that “they [Ferguson and Parker] completely distort my original paper,” Harris is the reporting writer, Ferguson and Parker the reported authors (“Commentary” 53).

In the process of identifying the verbs themselves, Thompson and Yiyun found it necessary to do two other things as well. First, they sought to identify the denotative potential of such verbs—for example, what type of activity—physical, mental, etc.—the verb denotes. And second, they sought to identify the evaluative potential of such verbs. For example, how the reader interprets (1) the importance, validity, etc. of the reported author and/or his research and (2) the reporting writer’s attitude or stance concerning the reported author’s research by examining the verbs the reporting writer chooses.

The authors collected reporting verbs for their study from the introductions of about 100 papers in diverse fields (e.g. applied linguistics, geology, public administration, engineering, and veterinary science). At the end of their study, they had collected over 400 of these verbs, pointing out that it would be impossible to identify all the verbs used as reporting verbs.

Because Thompson and Yiyun (1) cast a broad net in terms of subject matter and (2) were not able to compile a definitive list of reporting verbs, their study cannot be expected to explicate everything concerning the denotative and evaluative force of these verbs. However, they were able to construct a very workable classification system.

Their classification of reporting verbs in terms of evaluation, in particular, would seem to be useful in answering the questions of the current study.

In determining the evaluative potential of reporting verbs, the authors take into account three factors, each of which has different facets:

AUTHOR'S STANCE, or "the attitude which the author is reported as having towards the validity of the reported information or opinion" (372).

1. **POSITIVE**: the author is reported as presenting the information/opinion as true/correct; for example, *accept, emphasize, hypothesize, invoke, note, point out, posit, reason, subscribe to*.
2. **NEGATIVE**: the author is reported as presenting the information/opinion as false/incorrect: for example, *attack, challenge, dismiss, dispute, diverge from, object to, oppose, question, reject*.
3. **NEUTRAL**: the author is reported as presenting the information/opinion as neither true nor false at that point in his work; for example, *assess, examine, evaluate, focus on, pose, quote, tackle, undertake*. (372)

WRITER'S STANCE, or the writer's beliefs concerning the validity of the author's research.

1. **FACTIVE**: the writer portrays the author as presenting true information or a correct opinion; for example, *acknowledge, bring out, demonstrate, identify, improve, notice, prove, recognize, substantiate, throw light on*.
2. **COUNTER-FACTIVE**: the writer portrays the author as presenting false information or an incorrect opinion; for example, *betray (ignorance), confuse, disregard, ignore, misuse*.

3. NON-FACTIVE: the writer gives no clear signal as to her attitude towards the author's information/opinion; for example, *advance, believe, claim, examine, generalize, propose, retain, urge, utilize*. (372)

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION, unlike author's or writer's stance, concerned with "various aspects of the status of the proposition" (373).

1. AUTHOR'S DISCOURSE INTERPRETATION: the writer presents an interpretation of how the reported information/opinion fits into the author's text; for example, *add, comment, continue, detail, mention, note, recast, repeat, remark, sketch*.
2. AUTHOR'S BEHAVIOR INTERPRETATION: the writer presents an interpretation of the author's attitude or purpose in giving the reported information/opinion; for example, *admit, advocate, assert, criticize, hint, emphasize, favor, hypothesize, insist, reiterate, remind, warn*.
3. STATUS INTERPRETATION: the writer indicates the functional status within her own framework of the reported information/opinion; for example, *account for, bring out, confirm, conform to, overcome, establish, popularize, prove, solve*.
4. NON-INTERPRETATION: the writer presents the report as objective; for example, *adopt, apply, calculate, employ, map, observe, provide, recount, say, see, use, write*. (373)

"Professional Conflict: Disagreement In Academic Discourse" (Hunston 1993)

The purpose of this article is (1) to examine the way in which propositions in a discourse are evaluated and how this evaluation is open to analysis and (2) to examine

the role of discourse in academic research articles and how this discourse aids in the construction of knowledge in particular academic discourse communities (i.e. biochemistry, sociolinguistics, and history, representing Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities respectively). Hunston focuses on a set of research articles “in which the writer’s knowledge claims [**Proposed Claims**] are presented as being in conflict with another researcher’s knowledge claims [**Opposed Claims**]” (116). In doing so, she attempts to describe the linguistic strategies (e.g. verb force) used by the writer to achieve the required outcome or “persuasion of the readership to accept the writer’s claim above all opposition” (116).

Of the strategies she discusses, Hunston’s theory of **attitudinal verbs**, or verbs which typically signal specific attitudes or viewpoints is the most applicable to the current study. Hunston bases the following classes of attitudinal verbs on the categories set up by Thompson and Yiyun, but, as she stresses, “they also take account of the fact that a reporting verb may make implications about conflicting attitudes of current writer and original researcher” (124).

Class 1: Verbs of reporting (human subject): *find, observe, report*. No information about attitude is given.

Class 2: Verbs of subjective interpreting (human subject): *conclude, believe, suspect, interpret, suggest, characterize*. Information is given about the attitude of the subject of the verb.

Class 3: Verbs of objective interpreting (non-human subject): *show, indicate, demonstrate, establish, characterize, suggest*. Information is given about the attitude of the writer.

Class 4: Verbs of arguing (human subject): *note, point out*. Information is given about the attitude of the writer.

Class 5: Verbs of arguing (human subject): *claim, argue, admit, deny, insist, acknowledge, concur, declare*. A potential difference of attitude between writer and subject of verb is implied.

Class 6: Verbs of cognition (human subject): *realize, be aware, understand*.

When grammatically positive, information is given about the attitude of the writer. When grammatically negative, a difference of attitude between writer and subject of verb is implied.

Class 7: Verbs of reaction: *find significant, be struck/impressed by, convince, persuade*. A potential difference of attitude between writer and original researcher is implied.

LAKOFF'S RULES OF POLITENESS

Definition

Lakoff (1973) originally postulated the **Rules of Politeness** to supplement the maxims which govern Grice's Co-operative Principle. Related most closely to the Maxim of Manner, these rules reveal the linguistic choices one must make in order to communicate clearly while remaining on the side of appropriacy within a given context or discourse community.

What follows now is an outline of the Rules of Politeness and an example of the linguistics devices associated with each:

Rule 1: Don't impose.

Rule 2: Give options.

Rule 3: Make A feel good; be friendly.

Under R1 conditions, writers may use a more scientific, professional approach and employ technical terms to discuss what are normally unmentionable topics in a given culture, such as sex and elimination. In this way, speakers and writers can conduct their business without any emotional or cultural entanglement. For example, a group of urologists at a medical conference is more likely to be heard using the term *urinating* than *peeing*.

R2 conditions are similar to R1 conditions, seeking to avoidance imposition through intentional avoidance for more personal, less scientific, purposes; they include euphemistic terms, those which refer to an object or concept indirectly so that readers “need not interpret what is being said as THAT” (300). Consider an example gleaned from Lakoff's own "The Logic of Politeness; or, Minding Your P's and Q's" (1973). Each example involves an option concerning word choice, and the reader is required to imagine these examples as statements made by a society matron at an elegant party:

1. Excuse me, I have to
 - a. (go to the little girls' room.)
 - b. (defecate.) (301)

Lakoff argues that the society matron is more likely to choose the first option (a) over the second (b). Her choice may be predicted by examining the context of her remarks: an elegant party. Now consider another example, a comment made by a scholar in the context of a secondary response:

2. Brown disagrees with the results of the study,
 - a. (judging them incomplete without further research.)
 - b. (whining that they are incomplete without further research.)

Clearly, option (a) would be the choice of most scholars since the word *whining* in option (b) implies undisciplined or childlike behavior and would thus be considered inappropriate, even insulting, in most professional scholarly contexts.

Finally, Lakoff refers to R3 as the “camaraderie” rule, or the rule that dictates how the speaker must present himself in relation to his audience. R3 conditions would include terms such as nicknames. For example, if I were to meet the Governor of Louisiana—whom I do not know personally and who has considerably more public power and status than I—I would address him as *Mr. Foster* or *Governor Foster*, certainly not as friends and family probably do as *Michael* or *Mike*.

As Lakoff points out, words and sentences are not good and bad, successful and unsuccessful, in and of themselves: the context in which words and sentences are used affects their level of success. The point Lakoff attempts to make and the point I want to emphasize in terms of the scholarly response is that hearers “respond differently emotionally” to different language devices; therefore, “the careful speaker will tailor his device to his purpose” (301).

STUDIES OF LANGUAGE INTENSITY

Definition

Bowers (1963) describes language intensity as “the quality of language which indicates the degree to which the speaker’s attitude toward a concept deviates from neutrality” (345). For example, high intensity language tends to be more colorful, subjective, and emotionally-charged, while low intensity language tends to be more bland, objective, and dispassionate.

There are two studies in particular which discuss language intensity in terms of its ability to affect a person's credibility and persuasive potential and are thus of special interest to the current study: that of Bowers and that of Aune and Kikuchi (1993).

"Language Intensity, Social Introversion, and Attitude Change," J.W. Bowers (1963)

Bowers' study demonstrates the effects of language intensity by revealing the reactions of listeners to argumentative speeches employing varying levels of language intensity. Four different speeches were prepared, and in each, the "words and phrases which expressed the speaker's attitude toward the concept" were replaced by blanks. Then, using two different drafts of each speech, the blanks of one draft were filled with words already designated as low intensity, while the blanks of the other were filled with words already designated as high intensity. For example, a blank in the first draft of speech two might be filled with the low-intensity term *spent*, while the blank in the second draft of speech two was filled with the high-intensity term *squandered*.

As might be expected, Bowers found that speeches using highly intense language produce greater attitude change toward speakers and concepts than those using language of low intensity (316). In "anti" speeches, or critical speeches against concepts, this attitude change was more likely to be negative. This point is extremely important in the current study since the scholarly response paper, one remembers, is an act of critical exchange and can thus be classified as an "anti" speech.

In fact, in discussing audience responses to highly intense language in (1) a speech allegedly by a prominent home economist about women's fashion changes and (2) a speech allegedly by the former president of an Eastern university opposing progressive education (in addition to two other similar speeches), Bowers notes the following:

. . . the two low intensity speeches were significantly more effective than the two corresponding high intensity addresses, and the best post-mortem explanation is that the extremities in word choice produced a boomerang effect. Such highly loaded statements as comparing a type of education to prostitution and calling American women “deranged” may have caused the speakers *to lose credibility*. (351 emphasis added)

“Effects of Language Intensity Similarity on Perceptions of Credibility, Relational Attributions, and Persuasion,” R. Kelly Aune and Toshiyuki Kikuchi (1993)

Using the findings of researchers like Bowers as the basis of their study, Aune and Kikuchi (1993) added another variable with which to test the relationship between language intensity, speaker and message acceptance, and speaker credibility: the level of similarity between a source’s and receiver’s use of language intensity.

First, 286 college students were asked to fill in the blanks of a persuasive message with terms already designated as high or low intensity, their goal to increase the “persuasive effectiveness” of the message (228). Then these students read a persuasive message already containing these pre-designated terms and rated it as either positive or negative. The differences between these two messages were then calculated (for a more thorough explanation of this study, see Aune and Kikuchi 1993; 228-229). Findings supported the following hypotheses:

1. Similarity between a source's and a receiver's use of language intensity will be positively correlated with perception of the source’s credibility.
2. Similarity between a source's and receiver's use of language intensity will be positively correlated with more favorable relational attributions.
3. Similarity between a source's and a receiver's use of language intensity will be positively correlated with higher levels of agreement with message content. (226, 227)

Consequently, the authors were able to note that “perceived similarity in language intensity” is associated with “increases in perceptions of competence, sociability/character, and composure” (232).

In regard to the scholarly response paper, *source* would most obviously apply to the respondent, *receiver* to his readers. In other words, the respondent’s goal would be to match (1) the level of language intensity thought appropriate by his readers or (2) the level of intensity his readers would either use or claim to use if found in the same situation. But within the context of the scholarly response paper, *source* could also refer to the author of the original article and *receiver* to the primary and/or secondary respondents. In this case, failure of receivers to match the language intensity of the source could result in decreases of perceptions of receivers’ competence, sociability/character, and composure. For example, if the language and tone of the original article is of low intensity, a high intensity response from a respondent is likely to seem disproportionate, less persuasive, and less credible.

PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARIES AND CONCERNS

Before moving on to some sample analyses in the next section, I will restate aspects of the previously discussed theories/rules/studies, reiterating how and why these may be usefully applied to the scholarly response paper.

THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE AND THE CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

In sum, the presence of implicatures in the scholarly response paper would seem to signal an inappropriate, or unsuccessful, response, since, for example, readers surveyed for this study agreed that (1) statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent’s personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and

awards from other quarters), (2) accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him), and (3) language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling) were all threats to the success of the scholarly response paper. Note that these correspond roughly to violations of the Maxims of Relation, Quality, and Manner, respectively.

Now, according to researchers like Riley, speakers and writers do violate the underlying Co-operative Principle and create implicatures for positive purposes, such as "to achieve communication that is both understandable and polite" (1993; 179). But as Lakoff (1973) points out, implicatures are more likely to be used for this purpose in informal discourse and more intimate discourse where the relationship between the speaker and the hearer takes precedence over the clarity of communication, not in a genre like the scholarly response paper where the purpose is to exchange information, and does not (or should not) focus primarily on individuals.

It is also necessary to point out at this time that applying the maxims to passages from the scholarly response paper after seeing them function through textbook examples will reveal some differences. (The concept of implicature was originally viewed within the context of actual verbal exchange since implicatures are common within conversation.) Thus, the textbook examples reflect the context of verbal exchange, while examples from the scholarly response paper do not. However, as both Green (1990) and Marilyn Cooper (1982) point out, implicatures are also common in writing, and what Grice says about conversation "applies equally well to all communication" (Cooper 112).

Also, the scholarly response paper examples are not as sleekly cutting, or as oddly non-standard, and, in general, not as vividly obvious as the textbook examples. There are two primary reasons for this. First, textbook examples are, naturally, chosen or designed for vivid quality so that the principles they illustrate may be clearly grasped. Second, the import of a verbal exchange between two speakers is bound to be more immediately apparent than that of the scholarly response paper where the writer serves as Speaker One and a reading audience of the writer's peers (and their general perceptions) serves as Speaker Two.

STUDIES OF SEMANTIC (DENOTATIVE AND EVALUATIVE) VERB FORCE

Drawing from the theories and research findings of both Thompson/Yiyun and Hunston, I find that the following classes of verbs—due to purpose, form, and function—seem to have the greatest potential impact on the success or non-success of the scholarly response paper.

1. Verbs which imply **negative author's stance**: the author is reported as presenting the information/opinion as false/incorrect: for example, *attack, challenge, dismiss, dispute, diverge from, object to, oppose, question, reject*.
2. Verbs which imply **counter-factive writer's stance**: the writer portrays the author as presenting false information or an incorrect opinion; for example, *betray (ignorance), confuse, disregard, ignore, misuse*.
3. Verbs which imply **author's behavior interpretation**: the writer presents an interpretation of the author's attitude or purpose in giving the reported information/opinion; for example, *admit, advocate, assert, criticize, hint, emphasize, favor, hypothesize, insist, reiterate, remind, warn*.

4. **Attitudinal Verbs** corresponding to Hunston's Classes 5, 6, and 7:

a. **Verbs of arguing** (human subject): *claim, argue, admit, deny, insist, acknowledge, concur, declare*. A potential difference of attitude between writer and subject of verb is implied.

b. **Verbs of cognition** (human subject): *realize, be aware, understand*.

When grammatically positive, information is given about the attitude of the writer. When grammatically negative, a difference of attitude between writer and subject of verb is implied.

c. **Verbs of reaction**: *find significant, be struck/impressed by, convince, persuade*. A potential difference of attitude between writer and original researcher is implied.

In the next section, I will attempt to illustrate briefly how the use, particularly the frequent use, of these types of verbs may mark an scholarly response paper as inappropriate and unsuccessful.

For example, Thompson/Yiyun and Hunston's studies both found that verbs which imply counter-factive writer's stance are rarely chosen or at least occurred rarely during the research for their article. From this, they conclude that,

negative evaluation concerning the truth or correctness of what the author is reported as saying is not overtly carried by the reporting verb. This is obviously part of the general reluctance identified and analyzed by Myers (1989) to disagree explicitly in public with a fellow researcher. (372-373)

This shows that writers do not often use these sorts of verbs, and one assumes they refrain in order to avoid the sort of personal focus or unsupported accusations which may threaten effective communication, whether their reasoning be conscious or unconscious.

Also, Hunston notes that the verbs in classes 5-7 “all imply a state of disagreement between the writer and the original researcher. Thus, the presence of these verbs indicates a greater subjectivity and a more heavily argumentative style than does the presence of the verbs in classes 1-4” (125). And, one could argue, with greater subjectivity and a more heavily argumentative style comes a greater possibility of forgetting the scholarly purpose of the scholarly response paper, becoming overwhelmed by face/identity concerns, and producing an unsuccessful response.

RULES OF POLITENESS

In order to decide whether a given scholarly response paper is appropriate and successful according to Lakoff’s Rules of Politeness, one must know something about the expectations of its audience. In Chapter One, we saw that the majority of the readers in this study found that “language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling)” was a success to the threat to the success of the response paper. Unfortunately, there is no definitive list of such language. But commonsensically, one can examine language which seems obviously out of context, then gauge its overall affect on the response.

STUDIES OF LANGUAGE INTENSITY

Summarizing the findings of Bowers and Aune/Kikuchi in regard to the success of the scholarly response paper results in the following three hypotheses:

1. Using highly intense language is likely to cause a “boomerang effect” in “anti” arguments like the scholarly response paper. This, in turn, is likely to have a negative effect on the respondent’s credibility.

2. Using highly intense language, when such language differs from that which the reader would consider standard and appropriate, is likely to cause the respondent to be perceived as less credible and as having fewer positive attributes, while the reader will be less likely to agree with the respondent.
3. Using highly intense language, when the original article is basically of low language intensity, is likely to have the same results as Point 2, namely: “to cause the respondent to be perceived as less credible and as having fewer positive attributes, while the reader will be less likely to agree with the respondent.”

As seen in Chapter One, there is a strong link between the success of the response and scholarly credibility. All the readers agreed that an unsuccessful scholarly response paper can *to some degree* negatively affect a scholar’s credibility, and most agreed that this lack of credibility has the potential to affect that scholar’s future publication, job promotion, and especially peer standing (which may in turn affect publication and promotion). Thus responses which exhibit a great deal of high intensity language, resulting in loss of credibility, may be the most likely to termed unsuccessful.

SAMPLE ANALYSES

In order to demonstrate how the previously discussed theories/rules/studies may be used to determine the overall success or non-success of a scholarly response paper, these will applied in this section to passages from the secondary response discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter One of this study. Again, the title of this secondary response is “A Response to K. Scott Ferguson and Frank Parker’s ‘Grammar and Technical Writing’” (1992) and its author, Harris, is responding to Parker and

Ferguson's (1990) criticism of his original research article, "Linguistics, Technical Writing, and Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar" (1988).

First, some background information. Readers who responded to questions concerning the Harris and Ferguson/Parker exchange in Chapter Six of this study agreed that Harris's original article is basically professional, scholarly, and calm, although perhaps a little meandering and flowery as well. They also agreed that Ferguson and Parker's primary response, although much more blunt, unadorned, and to-the-point than Harris's original article, and occasionally exhibiting an excess of high language intensity, was overall successful. This success was due to the fact that the successful elements of this primary response—supporting arguments with concrete examples and citations and citing agreement with Harris on some points—outweighed any unsuccessful elements. As one reader put it, "I like the directness and specificity of Ferguson and Parker, but they could have been less aggressively direct, more tactful."

What follows then is an analysis of several sample passages from Harris's secondary response. Each passage is followed by an analysis which takes into account the theories/rules/studies discussed in this chapter. After all passages have been analyzed, the results of the analyses will be compared to the overall reader response findings regarding this response, fully documented in Chapter Six.

Passage 1:

Ferguson and Parker's recent *attack* [1] on an earlier paper of mine [2] calls for a few brief comments, although I'm very surprised that I had to wait for its publication to see their criticisms. Scholarly courtesy should have led them, minimally, to send me a preprint. *Discourtesy*, however, is the least of their scholarly *transgressions*. In their search for a *Bogey Man* against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' *scheme*, they completely *distort* my original paper. (53)

Here, Harris seems to use the intense terms *attack*, *discourtesy* and *scheme* to accuse his critics of shady behavior. *Transgressions*, too, a term almost synonymous with sins, seems a little strong in this context, as does the implication that Ferguson and Parker's criticism was not offered out of scholarly responsibility and interest, but out of a desire to present their own research with any *Bogey Man*, or fall guy, as back-drop. Thus while *transgressions* and *Bogey Man* (seemingly inappropriate in a professional scholarly context) can be read as violations of the Rules of Politeness, the final statement of the passage seems to be a violation of the Maxim of Quality since it indicates a bad act which is both personally focussed and unsupported.

Finally, Harris's use of the counter-factive verb *distort*, in the wake of negative terms like *attack*, *discourtesy* and *scheme*, seems to imply that his critics are guilty of deliberate and malicious behavior, another implication which seems to be personally, not professionally, focussed.

Passage 2:

There are a good many minor *manglings* of my views and arguments in their paper by way of *selective quotation* and *misrepresentative rephrasing* which would be *tedious* to detail here, but anyone interested in the rhetoric of excision and paraphrase can find a number of interesting negative examples by mapping their quotations and representations against the original text. Of particular interest is the catalog of jargon terms with which they *indict* my *supposedly obscure* presentation [1, p.359], all of which are much less formidable in context than in Ferguson and Parker's *quarantine* of them. The referees of JTWC, in any case, found my discussion clear enough for their audience, and I have had many *subsequent compliments* from technical communicators on the lucidity with which I present some highly complex issues. *The paper also won, to my very great pleasure, the distinguished Jay Gould Award for Excellence in Technical Communication.* (53)

In this example, Harris seems to violate both the Maxims of Quality and Quantity in the following ways. First, he seems to imply through his statement about *manglings*, *selective quotation*, and *misrepresentative rephrasing*, that his critics have intentionally

plotted his paper's downfall, something he could not possibly have adequate evidence for, and if he does, does not present in this paper (violates Maxim of Quality).

Second, though he mentions these various ill acts so that they will register with the reader, he goes no further in making his defense as informative as required. This failure to include *tedious* information (i.e. proof) could be construed as a face-saving act to deflect attention from what could easily be his own shortcomings (violates Maxim of Quantity).

Harris also seems to use the verb *indict* to imply negative author's stance. In other words, he seems to imply that his critics have been disproportionately judgmental in their criticism. The verb also implies quite subjectively a level of mental and emotional commitment on the part of Ferguson and Parker that would be difficult for Harris to prove, and thus seems inappropriate in this context (violates Maxim of Quality).

Moreover, the use of intense terms such as *manglings*, *selective quotation*, and *misrepresentative rephrasing* seems to encourage the reader to discount the views of Harris's critics, whom he casts as craftily dishonest, their own goal to make him seem *supposedly obscure*, and by the definition of *quarantine*, diseased or defective. Such intense language, promoting such personal focus, seems inappropriate in a professional scholarly context.

Finally, Harris, who goes on to say that to his *great pleasure* the paper in question won an award for excellence, also seems to violate the Maxim of Relation—that is, neither compliments nor awards are relevant to Ferguson and Parker's particular criticism of Harris's research. By violating this maxim, Harris seems to imply that others approve of his approach, therefore Ferguson and Parker must be wrong.

Passage 3:

One specific *distortion* (or, more accurately, aspersion) does require some attention, though: their treatment of my conflation of two transformations (extraposition and clefting, into *it*-shift), since it is the most specific and detailed claim of Ferguson and Parker's general implication that I really don't know what I'm talking about (see also, for instance, 1, p. 358, 358n1, 359, 360). I can't speak for Williams [3], whom they also *tar* with this brush, but my conflation was not done out of ignorance, as Ferguson and Parker strongly suggest, but out of expository convenience. (54)

In this passage, Harris seems to use the intense term *distortion* and the colorful verb *tar* (which has much the same force as the more common verb *attack*, but which calls to mind a particularly distasteful type of mob injustice) to imply negative author's stance. In other words, he seems to imply that his critics have falsely accused, then verbally persecuted him for his actions/beliefs, once again, a plot for which he has no proof (violates Maxim of Quality).

Passage 4:

There is, in fact, nothing evangelical about the paper at all, or even promotional. It simply presents some information about the field of linguistics that I felt might be of interest to teachers, theorists, and practitioners of technical communication, along with some evaluative comments from a linguist. The paper is largely descriptive, not persuasive, and has a number of explicit expository goals that Ferguson and Parker *ignore* completely—such as giving the recent history of formal linguistics, a history which is largely unknown outside the field and which can help eliminate a number of misconceptions that have developed about linguistics—but the most significant of these concern the value of a linguistic model for technical writing *instruction* [Harris's italics]. (54-55)

Here, Harris seems to use the counter-factive verb *ignore* to portray his critics as either deliberately self-serving or, perhaps, purely ignorant; personally focussed, neither aspersion is positive or appropriate.

Passage 5:

It is also worth noting that Ferguson and Parker see technical communicators as their only audience (and, evidently, as my only audience), noticeably excluding

teachers of technical communication. For instance, they *berate* me for not seeing the uses to which passive sentences can be put in technical communication and offer a discussion of thematic roles (which, to play one of their games for a moment, come from Gruber [6] and Jackendoff [7, 8], not Fillmore [9], as they *claim*) to correct my oversight. (55)

In this passage, Harris seems to use the verb *berate* to imply negative author's stance. In other words, he seems to imply that his critics deliver their criticism as a personal attack. We might also call *berate* a verb of arguing since it depicts the attitude of its subject: condescending, in this case, since *berate* usually implies a superior/inferior relationship (e.g. parent/child). Yet implying that his critics have forced such a relationship seems inappropriate in a professional scholarly context.

Harris also seems to use the verb *claim* to imply negative author's stance. In other words, in this particular context, he implies that his critics' points, and hence general research capabilities, are subject to suspicion.

Passage 6:

I have strong reservations about the *scheme* Ferguson and Parker offer—in particular, that it is only a set of statements to be memorized, not a set of principles to be learned; in short, that it is not linguistics. But I will leave it to readers of both articles to decide what might be useful to them in each, and leave the *meanspirited, school-yardish, my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* to Ferguson and Parker. (57)

In this instance, Harris seems to violate the Maxim of Manner. His colorful, insulting adjective phrases, generally unsuitable to such a context, muddy his argument whether he intends them to or not, resulting in communication which is hardly perspicuous. Furthermore, these terms only serve to call into question the character of Harris's critics and thereby once again deflect the possible validity of their actual criticism (violates Maxim of Relation).

Finally, intense terms such as *scheme*—which is much more intense than, say, *plan*—and *meanspirited*, *school-yardish*, and *my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* seem to violate the Rules of Politeness since they are hardly standard in a professional scholarly context, *school-yardish* in particular being more reminiscent of a child throwing a tantrum than a scholar asserting a professional opinion.

The tone of this secondary response is highly emotional, the language intensity much higher than in the two previous articles. Furthermore, the list of intense words, nouns and verbs alike, is a long one, especially for such a short document. According to studies of language intensity, then, Harris's response is likely to backfire, most likely having a negative affect on his scholarly credibility, and readers will be unlikely to consider his response successful. This in fact was the case since all of the editors and readers who analyzed this response for this study found it to be unsuccessful overall, agreeing that an unsuccessful response has a strong potential negative impact on a scholar's credibility.

CHAPTER TWO SUMMARY

In Chapter One, I noted that readers of scholarly responses surveyed for this study agreed that certain elements such as the ones listed below threaten the purpose, and thus the success, of the scholarly response paper and should thus be avoided:

- a. Statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).

- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being deliberately misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort, attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").

In this chapter, I proposed and described five different theories/rules/studies which help to explain and illustrate why such elements are destructive in order to develop a more formal and objective method of determining whether a scholarly response paper is successful or unsuccessful. I then applied these to passages from one specific secondary scholarly response paper, finding that some of them overlap; for example, an offending counter-factive verb may also meet the criteria for inappropriate language intensity. My most important finding, however, was that, at least where the sample response is concerned, these theories/rules/studies seem effective in determining the success of a response, as they seem to confirm the findings regarding this response which have been cited in Chapters One and Two of this study and which will be discussed again in Chapter Six.

Therefore, I am able to form the following hypotheses in regard to the responses analyzed in Chapters Three-Seven:

1. Maxim violations, particularly numerous maxim violations, indicate an unsuccessful response.
2. Verbs which imply negative author's stance (*attack*); counter-factive writer's stance (*misuse*); author's behavior interpretation (*criticize*); attitudinal verbs

of arguing (*deny*); cognition (*do not realize*); and reaction (*convince*); often signal a focus on researchers, not research, and thus are often too intense for this context. Their extensive use, then, may render a response unsuccessful.

3. Terms which violate the Rules of Politeness within the context of a scholarly response paper are inappropriate and may produce negative results, particularly in regard to a respondent's credibility.
4. Highly intense language, particularly when used excessively and in disproportion to preceding articles, will have a negative impact on both the scholar's credibility and the success of the response.

Yet only the larger sample analyses in Chapters Three-Seven will show if these are useful in a broader context. Thus the following sections provide important information concerning the responses chosen for analysis, the journals and discourse communities which produced these, and how these analyses will be conducted.

DISCUSSION OF THE ANALYSIS PROCESS IN CHAPTERS THREE-SEVEN

SELECTION PROCESS

Definitions

As stated in Chapter One, a **scholarly response paper** is defined as either:

1. Criticism published in response to an **original article** (primary response)
2. A response by the author of an original article to the published criticism of that article (secondary response)

For example, in *Applied Linguistics*, Carol A. Chapelle's "Disembedding 'Disembedded Figures in the Landscape'" (1992) would be a **primary response** to Roger Griffiths and Ronald Sheen's original research article "Disembedded Figures in the Landscape"

(1992). Thus Ronald Sheen's response to Chapelle's primary scholarly response paper entitled "A Rebuttal to Chapelle's Response to Griffiths and Sheen" (1993) would be a **secondary response**.

A **response set** consists, at minimum, of one original article and at least one primary scholarly response paper. However, sets sometimes contain more than one primary scholarly response paper and one or more secondary scholarly response papers. Furthermore, each article in the set must include the author's name since anonymity can alter the style and quality of criticism.

Any response set which did not fit the preceding definition was not considered as part of this study. For example, there were a few sets in *College Composition and Communication* and a few sets in *Publications of the Modern Language Association* which for reasons which will be described later, did not fit the current definition of a response set. It is also important to note that this study did not consider book reviews. Although the book review is similar to the scholarly response paper in that it is a critical genre, it is just that: a separate genre which is not addressed in the current study.

Time Frame

All the response sets analyzed in this study were published between 1986 and 1996.

Journal Sample

As explained in the introduction to this study, I have chosen to focus on a specific group of liberal arts journals, more specifically, those which document research under the "English" umbrella. These include a linguistics journal (*Applied Linguistics*); two types of writing/writing research journals (*Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* and *College Communication and Composition*); one major literary

research journal (*Publications of the Modern Language Association*); and one smaller field-specific literary research journal (*Early American Literature*).

My rationale in establishing such a test group was to allow me to find out (or begin to find out) whether differences between different disciplines/sub-cultures in the same field had any bearing on the perceived success of a response, hence whether my methods could be used with greater or lesser success in these different areas.

General Information (Each Journal)

Before beginning an analysis of the scholarly response papers published in each journal, I first determined how often the journal was published (e.g. quarterly), its status in its particular field, whether or not status was achieved publishing here, and how the journal presented itself in its mission statement. I did so because all of these factors may be of some importance in interpreting how many responses are published in the journal and how respondents are likely to frame their criticism. For example, journals published more often are likely to have more room to devote to response exchanges; however, if such a journal is devoted to “pure” research, it may include less individual commentary. And if the status of the journal is high, respondents may be more or less careful when publishing criticism which will be publicly accessible.

Publication Statistics (Each Journal)

For each journal, I determined how many response sets were published in the designated time frame, 1986-1996, and determined the make-up of each set. For example, of the six response sets published in *Applied Linguistics* between 1986 and 1996, how many included only primary responses? Both a primary and a secondary response? Consistently low numbers of secondary responses, for instance, might

indicate a desire to avoid potential (overly) personal involvement in the critical process, and thus perhaps point to a more dispassionate group of response writers.

I also found it useful to determine whether or not each journal solicited responses directly; whether or not it published responses frequently or infrequently, and why this was the case; whether or not the style of the response was formal or informal; and whether the titles had original flair. In addition, I calculated the average length of scholarly response papers in each of the journals and determined whether or not primary responses were published alongside original articles, secondary responses were published alongside primary responses, etc. If original articles and responses were not published in the same issue, I also determined how much time elapsed between the publication of the original article and the primary response, the primary response and the secondary response, etc.

All of these variables may be of importance in determining how seriously respondents and readers viewed such exchanges and whether or not such exchanges were more carefully structured than others. For example, longer scholarly response papers are likely to be more thorough and hence more formal. And simultaneous publication indicates a more structured and potentially more successful form of exchange, since respondents have had advance notice of criticism and time to frame more careful responses.

Overall Response Type (Each Journal)

Here, I tried to use my outsider's impressions to form a tentative general assessment of the type of responses published in each journal. For example, are responses formal and dispassionate overall? Are they thorough, addressing a topic point by point and

supporting criticism with concrete evidence? Or are they often off-the-cuff and seemingly personally motivated?

Part of this assessment involved the frequent/infrequent appearance of elements discussed in Chapters One and Two:

- a. Statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being deliberately misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort, attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").

Choosing Responses for Analysis (Each Journal)

In choosing responses for analysis, my goal was a balanced sample.

For example, I tried to choose responses which both included and did not include violations of Grice's Maxims so that I could determine whether or not such violations seemed to have a negative affect on the success of the scholarly response paper.

Granted, it was sometimes difficult to provide enough examples with which to analyze all of the theories/rules/studies discussed in Chapter Two. This is because *Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, and the *Journal of Technical Writing and*

Communication publish very few scholarly response papers, so I was only able to analyze what was available to me (six sets in *Applied Linguistics* for a total of seven primary and secondary responses; two sets in *Early American Literature* for a total of three primary and secondary responses; and two sets in the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* for a total of four primary and secondary responses).

For the remaining journals, I simply tried to analyze what seemed to be a solid representative segment within the context of an initial study like this one. Thus out of the six response sets published in *Applied Linguistics*, I analyzed three, for a total of four responses (three primary, one secondary). And out of the larger sample pools provided by *College Composition And Communication* and *Publications Of The Modern Language Association* (32 and 94 sets respectively), I analyzed six sets from each journal for a total of twelve responses (six primary, six secondary) from each journal.

Questionnaires

Editor Questionnaires

The editors of each of the five journals were asked to complete questionnaires which included questions concerning scholarly response paper submission and publication, successful/unsuccessful response style and content, and the unsuccessful response's potential impact on scholarly credibility. Questionnaires differed only slightly in the section on submission and publication. For example, the editor of *Early American Literature* was asked his opinion on the scarce number of scholarly response papers in his journal, while this question was obviously inappropriate in the case of *PMLA*'s editor. Some of the editors' responses have already been given in Chapter One,

and others appear when appropriate in Chapters Three-Seven. (For an example of one of these documents and an account of responses to questions held in common, see Appendices A, B, and C.)

Reader Questionnaires

Fourteen scholars, each with field-specific ties to one of the five journals, were asked to complete questionnaires which included general questions concerning response style and content and specific questions concerning scholarly response papers in their fields which are offered for analysis in Chapters Three-Seven¹. After answering specific questions regarding each response, respondents were asked to rate that response (a) very successful, (b) successful, (c) unsuccessful, or (d) very unsuccessful overall.

As to the distribution of reader respondents, *Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, and the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* were each assigned two respondents; because of the larger number and broader themes of scholarly response papers in the *College Composition and Communication* and *Publications of the Modern Language Association* analyses, each was assigned four respondents (two for sets one, two, and three; two for sets four, five, and six).

Responses to these questionnaires appear both in Chapter One and in Chapters Three-Seven of this study. (For an example of one of these documents and an account of responses to questions held in common, see Appendices D, E, and F.)

ENDNOTES

1. A few of the respondents worried that some of these questions were possibly “skewed” and that in some particularly pointed questions, I appeared to be “leading” the reader to a desired response. This is a valid observation, but not a pressing concern in this situation. While there is undoubtedly some small amount of bias or subjectivity on my part, my main goal in framing the questions this way was to

move the respondents to object to and qualify my position, thus giving me more detailed useful information.

CHAPTER THREE: *APPLIED LINGUISTICS*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applied Linguistics (AL) is a quarterly publication whose aims, according to its mission statement, include “promot[ing] a principled approach to research on language and language-related concerns by encouraging enquiry into the relationship between theoretical and practical studies” (i). This journal seems to have a more “scientific” bent than some journals in English studies being “less interested in the ad hoc solution of particular problems and more interested in the handling of problems in a principled way by reference to theoretical studies” (i). Areas for study include first and second language learning and teaching, critical linguistics, discourse analysis, language in education, language planning, language testing, lexicography, multilingualism and multilingual education, stylistics and rhetoric, and translation.

When asked if they considered *AL* a highly-respected—or at the very least important—journal in their field, and whether or not the writers published here have some stake in making a good impression on their audience, one of the readers gave an unqualified “yes.” The other reader, replied that she “had no basis for judgment,” presumably because her participation in other sub-fields of linguistics has prevented exposure to this particular publication. However, she did feel that such stakes are connected to “*any* publication, in *any* journal.”

PUBLICATION STATISTICS

Approximately six response sets were published in *AL* between 1986 and 1996. Five of these included only primary responses; only one included both a primary and a secondary response. When asked why he thought few secondary responses, in

particular, were submitted to his journal, the Editor of *AL*, who wishes to remain nameless, replied that he thought “authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary.”

AL does not directly solicit scholarly response papers and does not publish these frequently or with any regularity. The Editor of *AL* says that this is because “our policy has been to publish as many quality original research papers in a given volume (four issues) as possible; we are thus not set up to handle regular response pieces.”

When responses are submitted for publication, the editor does require respondents to meet some general criteria, including meeting a certain page limit, proving the necessity of publishing a response (i.e. explaining their rationale), and providing their names. Not surprising then, the style of response papers published in *AL* is fairly formal, and titles have original flair (are not simply stark restatements of the title of the preceding article). When asked if he *preferred* to (a) solicit responses as part of controlled debate for a given issue, or (b) publish unsolicited and perhaps unanticipated responses, the editor acknowledged no preference, but replied that “[he had] done both, depending on the original paper.” The editor also noted that there were responses he had refused to print due to language that could be construed as inappropriate, insulting, or overly intense, but that he had offered to publish these after the respondents made necessary changes.

Also, responses published in *AL* are eight pages long on average, longer than those of any other journal in this study. Around two-thirds of these responses were published alongside the original articles in the same issue, indicating authors’ participation in a more structured type of exchange. The editor indeed confirmed that when *AL* publishes

unsolicited responses, the writers of the articles involved are notified by e-mail and invited to respond.

OVERALL RESPONSE TYPE

For the most part, scholarly response papers in *AL* tend to be professional and scholarly, both in tone and organization, and to genuinely support the purpose of the genre. Authors tend to first summarize the document to which they respond, then address the topic point by point, using direct quotes and additional information to calmly and dispassionately support their arguments.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS

“THE DANGERS OF DICHOTOMY: A REPLY TO HULSTIJN,” ELLEN BIALYSTOK (1990)

This article is a primary response to Jan H. Hulstijn’s “A Comparison Between the Information-Processing and the Analysis/Control Approaches to Language Learning” (1990). In it, Bialystok attempts to clarify what she believes is a misunderstanding of her work, work which is stated as a large part of Hulstijn’s argument. In the following passage, she explains that the language learning theories Hulstijn labels “information-processing” and “analysis/control” (Bialystok’s theory) are really *both* information-processing theories:

Dichotomies are seductive. They divide the world neatly into categories: right and wrong; good and evil; us and them. But they are inevitably incorrect descriptions of the world. Hulstijn has set out to compare two views of second language learning which he calls the “information-processing framework” and the “Analysis/Control framework.” Their presentation is oppositional, creating dichotomy, and compelling a choice between them. My reply to his paper centres on the claim that Hulstijn’s argument is based on an incorrect dichotomy. (46)

Note Bialystok's calm, professional tone. She shows no personal offense, and seems to try to avoid criticizing Hulstijn personally (*Hulstijn's argument is based on an incorrect dichotomy* as opposed to *Hulstijn's beliefs are incorrect*). Both readers agreed that this technique is more likely to promote successful communication than a direct focus on Hulstijn himself.

Bialystok clearly outlines Hulstijn's position and discusses her disagreements point by point, which readers agreed was a type of organization more likely to result in success than criticism offered out of context. We see this organization illustrated in the next passage:

The Analysis/Control distinction offers a framework for task demands rather than for language development.

Hulstijn's contention is that the Analysis/Control framework "can only account for the development of metalinguistic skills (from age 5 onward)." Empirically, this is simply incorrect, as we have conducted research in oral (Bialystok 1982) and literacy (Bialystok 1988a; Bialystok and Miterer 1987) domains as well as the metalinguistic one (Bialystok 1986). (47)

Again, Bialystok is professional and calm, and does not employ any high-intensity verbs like *attacks*, *chides*, or *accuses*, a technique that readers agreed is more likely to result in successful communication. Instead, she uses the simple citation of research studies as proof for her argument. And when she agrees with Hulstijn's research, she points this out as in the following passage:

Hulstijn is correct in pointing out that different aspects of linguistic knowledge are analysed at different times and at different rates. It is asynchrony in analysis that gives the process its continuous character. (49)

Both readers agreed that finding points of agreement in another scholar's criticism is a good way to promote the successful exchange of information. They also thought that the previous statement shows Bialystok's willingness to participate in the professional

exchange of scholarly information and an unwillingness to turn the exchange into a personal campaign. Bialystok's final words seem further proof of this:

Hulstijn remarks several times that my theorizing has changed through the years, and I make no apology for this. The delicate balance between theory and research, between empirical finding and explanation of results, is what propels science. I am satisfied that my current descriptions are well supported by empirical data. I would not be satisfied if this current description were the final version. (51)

Both readers agreed that this passage does not seem to contain any hint of personal offense or insult and that although Bialystok's words are mild, they are powerful in that they emphasize the greater importance of a professional's search for truth, rather than simply a personal need to win an argument.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *absence* of Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as using a calm tone; avoiding personal criticism; using background information and point-by-point organization to provide context; and emphasizing the professional, not personal, value of the response exchange.

Both readers found this primary response very successful overall. One reader further noted the affect of positive stylistic elements on the response's overall success, stating that,

She is hard on his ideas and claims, but she is not hard on him personally (ex. Hulstijn's contention . . . is simply incorrect [p. 47]). Also her paper is organized around eight claims he makes in his original paper; good organization and presentation.

“DISEMBEDDING ‘DISEMBEDDED FIGURES IN THE LANDSCAPE . . .’: AN APPRAISAL OF GRIFFITHS AND SHEEN’S ‘REAPPRAISAL OF L2 RESEARCH ON FIELD DEPENDENCE/INDEPENDENCE,’” CAROL A. CHAPELLE (1992)

This article is a primary response to Griffiths and Sheen’s “Disembedded Figures in the Landscape: A Reappraisal of L2 Research on Field Dependence/Independence” (1992). In it, Chapelle attempts to point out what she believes are misconceptions on the part of Griffiths and Sheen, asserting that they “‘reapprised’ without first appraising the details of theory proposed or research conducted in this area” (375).

Chapelle supports all her claims by citing pertinent studies, other researchers, etc. When asked if by being thorough and organized in her criticism Chapelle is supporting the successful exchange of information in a professional scholarly context, both readers replied “yes.” Now consider the following passage:

The title of Griffiths and Sheen’s article, ‘Disembedded figures in the landscape . . .’ promises a reappraisal of the second language acquisition (SLA) research on field independence/dependence (FI/D). A reappraisal of this work is indeed warranted after two decades of research on the topic. Unfortunately, Griffiths and Sheen (G and S) ‘reappraised’ without first appraising the details of the theory proposed or research conducted in this area. Although their article touched on some of the issues relevant to understanding this work, they confused enough of the fundamentals so as to make no sense of it at all. They could therefore conclude only that ‘FI/D has not, and never has had, any relevance to second-language learning’ (G and S: 133) and (ironically) that researchers should be warned against reviewing literature in a superficial fashion, using sources carelessly, and failing to evaluate assumptions (G and S: 145). In other words, their reappraisal concludes that SLA-FI/D work is ill-founded and that researchers should be advised to practice principles of good scholarship. (375)

By stating that *A reappraisal of this work is indeed warranted after two decades of research on the topic*, Chapelle seems to preface her disagreement with agreement, even commendation. When asked if they agreed that this an effective way to promote the successful exchange of ideas in a professional scholarly context, both readers said yes.

In contrast, Chapelle's use of the verb *confused* and her assertion that regarding the topic of their article, Griffiths and Sheen make *no sense*, both seem to imply that Griffiths and Sheen have conducted unsound, even amateurish, research. This implication, in turn, would seem to reflect badly on the researchers' scholarly credibility. But when asked if they believed that such terms are too intense and too personally focused for this professional scholarly context, both readers replied "no," one adding that "the issue here is [the statement] *makes no sense [of it] at all*; this disallows *any* sense, and is too strong."

Chapelle notes that Griffiths and Sheen *conclude . . . (ironically)* that researchers should be warned against reviewing literature in a superficial fashion, using sources carelessly, and failing to evaluate assumptions. This statement would seem to imply, of course, that Griffiths and Sheen are guilty of all these things. When asked if they believed that this type of implication, being extremely personally focused, is appropriate in a professional scholarly context, both readers said yes. One added that the implication is acceptable since "she's beating them with their *own* words," and the other stated: "I don't see this as personally focussed. If used accurately in reference to research and methodology, they [such terms] are acceptable."

When asked if they believed that terms such as *superficial*, *carelessly*, and *failing*, are too intense for a professional scholarly context—given that in their context they can easily be construed as personal insult, not professional commentary—both readers said no. One reader added that they *would* be "wrong if used personally," though she did not believe they were. Now consider a final passage from Chapelle's primary response:

Among the opinions G and S cited was that of Tiedemann (1989), who observed that after three decades of research on cognitive styles, still no one can claim

whether or not they exist; he sees life as too short to continue such research. In my opinion, life is both too short and too complex for us to ignore concepts such as cognitive style which express some of our intuitions about students and which facilitate appreciation for the divergent approaches to thinking and learning. Of course, I can appreciate why some prefer not to pursue an idea which appears to have lost the interest of the 'authorities' and which rests on a construct currently without an adequate means of measurement. But, personally, I believe that the most important and relevant human constructs are those which are neither interesting to 'authorities' nor measurable at present. (381)

When asked if, in their opinion, the tone of Chapelle's response reveals a deep professional interest in the topic, both readers said yes. In light of this, readers were asked if they agreed that in spite of any mistakes she might have made, Chapelle fulfills the purpose of the response in contributing to the scholarly exchange of ideas, an exchange which is motivated by professional, not personal, needs. Again, both readers said yes.

General Diagnosis: In this case, the use of intense, negative verbs and general language intensity did not seem to significantly affect the overall success of the response. However, the presence of positive stylistic elements such as citing pertinent studies; being thorough and organized; prefacing disagreement with agreement; and showing sincere professional interest in the topic obviously had a positive effect on the outcome and seemed to effectively balance any negative or potentially negative elements such as inappropriate language intensity. Indeed, both respondents rated this primary response successful overall.

**"A REBUTTAL TO CHAPELLE'S RESPONSE TO GRIFFITHS AND SHEEN,"
RONALD SHEEN (1993)**

This article is a secondary response to Carol A. Chapelle's "Disembedding 'Disembedded Figures in the Landscape . . .': An Appraisal of Griffiths and Sheen's 'Reappraisal of L2 Research on Field Dependence/Independence,'" which is itself a

primary response to Roger Griffiths and Ronald Sheen's "Disembedded Figures in the Landscape: A Reappraisal of L2 Research on Field Dependence/Independence."

In his response, Sheen both criticizes and discounts Chapelle's support of a second language learning theory known as field dependence/independence, or FD/I. Consider the following passage:

Carol Chapelle's long, detailed response to Griffiths and Sheen (1992) (G and S) contains little which invalidates their arguments and, therefore, provokes the temptation to ignore it. (98)

Here, one might argue that Sheen violates the Maxim of Quantity, deliberately excluding information in an attempt to discount the weight of such information. One reader agreed with this interpretation and found such an exclusion inappropriate, given that without some sort of direct comparison to Chapelle's argument, Sheen's statement may be misleading. The other reader disagreed with this interpretation, but did not say why.

Sheen seems to violate the Maxim of Quantity again in the following passage, where this attempt to discount information seems coupled with slightly inappropriate language intensity:

It will serve no purpose to repeat the arguments already explored in detail in the original article, particularly as Chapelle has failed to offer any convincing rebuttal thereof. What she has done is to raise numerous minor points largely irrelevant to the central issue. I will comment on several and ignore the rest for fear of prolonging the excessive time already devoted to this field of research. (98-99)

Readers agreed that by attaching the adjectives *numerous* and *minor* to the term *points*, and using terms like *irrelevant* and *excessive*, Sheen encourages his audience to discount the import of Chapelle's critique, although one reader noted that his efforts were "unsuccessful." Thus there is indeed a violation of the Maxim of Quantity here

which is not in Sheen's favor. Readers were also asked if they thought the use of the verb *ignore*, which seems to function here as a negative verb of reaction, also encourages this while highlighting Sheen's concern with his own ego (Sheen is so confident that he is right that he can simply ignore Chapelle). One reader said "yes," the other "no." Finally, when asked if the use of negative terms such as *irrelevant* and *excessive* constitute inappropriate language intensity in a professional scholarly context," the readers were again divided. One replied that "no, the problem is not intensity, but rather that he is side-stepping her charges." The other reader agreed, with qualification, that the language intensity was harmful: "I'm not sure I'd say it was inappropriate—it just might lead one to discount his [Sheen's] own arguments."

Consider another passage from Sheen's secondary response:

To use the word 'insightful' to describe the decision of the first researchers in the field (Naiman, Frölich, Stern, and Todesco 1978; Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesee 1976) to use the EFT and the FID construct renders the word meaningless. They omitted to carry out the necessary exhaustive investigation of either the test or the construct and in doing so created an illusory impression of a soundly-based hypothesis. I would suggest that 'cavalier' would be a more appropriate term and that 'insightful' might be used more appropriately for those who wisely refrained from further research in this field. (99)

Here, both readers agreed that Sheen uses a great deal of language intensity to disparage his critics and their views (*cavalier* scholars who *created an illusory impression of a soundly-based hypothesis*) in favor of himself and his own views (an *insightful* scholar who *wisely refrained from further research in this field*). Not that Sheen goes out of his way to explain his views; in the next passage, he again seems to violate the Maxim of Quantity by failing to include pertinent information to support his own argument:

In conclusion, may I add that although others may wish to pursue this controversy, I prefer to follow the example of the early researchers in this

domain, abandon it and seek more fertile fields—and this for the reasons already amply provided in Griffiths and Sheen’s paper. (100)

Ironically, by involving himself in a scholarly response paper, Sheen is pursuing controversy. Asked, then, whether Sheen’s failure to articulate or rearticulate his points clearly makes it seem as if he feels that to do so is to lower or weaken his position, both readers replied “yes.” Their answer confirms that this is another violation of the Maxim of Quantity which has not worked in Sheen’s favor.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations had the most significant effect on the overall success of the response, while the use of intense negative verbs and the use of generally intense language had a notable, though less significant, effect.

One reader found this secondary response unsuccessful, the other, very unsuccessful. The first reader softened her judgment a bit by pointing out that certain elements of Chapelle’s primary response (e.g. statements like *their prose runs in circles* [377]) very likely influenced this outcome. The second reader’s comments stressed the negative impact of Maxim violations and general language intensity:

The main problem is that Sheen’s response cannot be read on its own (i.e. reader must refer to Griffiths and Sheen and Chapelle to make sense of what he’s saying); his response is further undercut by sarcasm and side-stepping.

“‘I BET HE DRINKS CARLING BLACK LABEL’: A RIPOSTE TO OWEN ON CORPUS GRAMMAR,” GILL FRANCIS AND JOHN SINCLAIR (1994)

This article is a primary response to “Corpus-Based Grammar and the Heineken Effect: Lexico-grammatical Description for Language Learners” by Charles Owen (1993), which is in turn an article which discusses the validity of something called the Collins Cobuild English Grammar. Owen seems scholarly and dispassionate, even dry. While he is critical of COBUILD, he admits to positive points and makes no personal

attacks on its supporters. Thus one would expect a similar type of professional tone and language use in Francis and Sinclair's primary response, tone and language which do indeed appear in their introductory paragraphs:

Owen writes a general critique of trends in linguistics and *AL*, with particular reference to the Collins Cobuild English Grammar (Sinclair, Fox, et al. 1990, henceforth CCEG). He makes too many points, sometimes almost casually, for us to deal with in a single short paper, so we will confine ourselves to what seems to be the central issue—the role of the corpus in pedagogical grammar. This must follow a brief consideration of the role of the corpus in any grammar at all. We will try to clear up a few misunderstandings and set out our view of the unique value of a corpus, with an extended example. (190)

Note the calm, even tone expressed especially in terms like *clear up*, *misunderstandings*, and *set out our view*. However, the tone soon seems to shift, as in the following passage:

Owen's specific attack on CCEG is based on two kinds of argument, both very weak. First, he sets up his own criteria for the usefulness of the lists of class members, and then discovers—surprise, surprise—that CCEG does not do well on these criteria. (191)

Here, we seem to see some examples of inappropriate language intensity. Owen's *critique* has become an *attack*, his arguments characterized as *very weak*, terms which seem to characterize Owen as either too intellectually aggressive or passive. However, when asked if they thought such terms represented inappropriate language intensity, one reader replied "no," the other "yes," noting especially the qualifier *very* in *very weak*.

Then there is the sarcastic interjection, *surprise, surprise*, which seems inappropriate both for its intensity and its violation of the Rules of Politeness; such an interjection does not seem scholarly or professional, does not further the purpose of the response, and thus would not seem appropriate to this context. (Neither, I should add, does the other sarcastic interjection which appears in this article, *Oops! Apologies* [194].) Both readers did in fact agree that such a sarcastic interjection is too intense for

a professional scholarly context. Now to consider another passage from Francis and Sinclair's primary response:

He [Owen] chides us for being vague about numbers ("What is 'small'?", "What is 'most frequent'?") as if wishing us to follow conventions of scientific reporting which would not be appropriate in a pedagogical grammar. We could have filled the book with numbers, but tried hard not to.

Final decisions were made by human beings exercising their judgement. Owen discovers this in triumph, as if he had caught us cheating. (194)

Negative author's behavior interpretation verbs like *chides* and *discovers* (*in triumph*) seem to imply that Owen is basically behaving in a less than scholarly way, that perhaps he is being petty, or condescending, etc. Both readers agreed with this interpretation. One reader did note, however, that *chides* seems to be a worse term here, since "it implies dishonesty," but that *discovers* would be acceptable without *in triumph*. Both readers, though, agreed that this is an inappropriate implication given that what Owen actually says is:

The 'Guide to the Use of the Grammar' (pp. xv-xvii) says: 'If the word class is small, then all members of it are given. If it is large, then the most frequently used members are given.' That may seem rational, but from the view of the user, it is impossible to tell whether any particular list is supposed to be exhaustive or not. What is 'small'? What is most 'frequent'? The exclusion principle cannot work unless the user is fairly confident of near-exhaustiveness. (180)

The disparity between Owen's statement and Francis and Sinclair's implication, then, is clearly a violation of the Maxim of Quality which does not work in the respondents' favor. Also, given the fact that Owen appears neither chiding nor particularly triumphant in this passage, readers were asked if they thought that Francis and Sinclair employed these verbs in an attempt to save face, perhaps driven by a personal need to protect their pet argument. One reader replied "yes," the other "maybe."

In the final paragraph of their primary response, Francis and Sinclair seem to return to the more professional tone of their introduction, at the same time revealing what may be the primary flaw of their approach:

We hope that in answering Owen we have not merely satisfied our retaliatory instincts, but brought out a number of useful points in the debate about grammar, which looks like involving corpora more and more in the coming years. We are grateful to Charles Owen for the detailed work he has done and we see it as constructive criticism, from which Cobuild grammars will profit.
(200)

While Francis and Sinclair end on an appropriate note, a thank-you stressing the importance of the scholarly exchange of information that the scholarly response paper stands for, readers agreed that it is hard to accept their sincerity due to the *retaliatory instincts* expressed by the presence of inappropriate language intensity, violations of the Rules of Politeness and the conversational maxims, and inappropriate verb force. One reader characterized the use of the intense phrase *retaliatory instincts* as “ugly.”

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations did indicate a response which was unsuccessful to some degree, as did the use of intense negative verbs and violations of the Rules of Politeness. Inappropriate language intensity, however, seemed to have a more limited affect on the success of the response.

When asked how they would rate this primary response overall, one reader replied:

Between successful and unsuccessful. I would rate this somewhere in the middle. Francis and Sinclair use a lot of facts and analysis in spite of their sarcasm, so the response is not totally ineffective. Let's put it this way. Their response would have been greatly improved if they had edited out the sarcasm—surprise, surprise!

The other reader made a similar assessment, finding the response successful “with reservations,” noting again the number of “unnecessary” or overly intense comments like *Oops! Apologies* (194).

CHAPTER THREE SUMMARY

Given that factors concerning general information, publication statistics, and overall response tone indicated an orderly, dispassionate approach to criticism, I expected members of the *Applied Linguistics* discourse community to be extremely sensitive to violations of Grice's Maxims, the use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of generally intense language. But overall, Maxim violations and violations of the Rules of Politeness seemed to have the most significant effect on the success of the response, while the use of intense negative verbs and general language intensity had less power to render the response unsuccessful. Still, responses which had a greater number of maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense terms (e.g. Sheen) tended to be more unsuccessful, while those which avoided these elements, either to a large degree or entirely, tended to be more successful (e.g. Bialystok). These more successful responses also tended to employ a more positive set of stylistic elements such as calmly and thoroughly organizing criticisms and providing background for criticism; finding points of agreement; and showing sincere professional interest both in the topic and the professional purpose of the response exchange.

CHAPTER FOUR: *EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Early American Literature (EAL) is a tri-annual publication aimed at the study of American Literature “through the early national period, about 1830” (i). Due to its more narrow focus, it does not have same kind of professional clout as the broader literary journal *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. But both of the readers in this section agreed that it is a highly-respected—or at the very least important—journal in their field, and that writers published here have some stake in making a good impression on their readers.

PUBLICATION STATISTICS

Only two response sets were published in *EAL* between 1986 and 1996. Both of these included primary responses, while only one included a secondary response. When asked why he thought so few primary responses were submitted to his journal, Editor Phillip Gura cited three primary reasons: (1) authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary, (2) scholars in this field are relatively few in number, and (3) this field is not as “bitterly contested as is scholarship in other areas of inquiry.” The lack of a secondary response in the other set could indicate the author of the original article’s desire to avoid possible personal involvement in the critical process, but numbers are too small to make any solid determination. And when asked if he thought avoiding personal involvement or another factor was behind the lack of a secondary response, Gura replied that he “didn’t wish to generalize.”

EAL does not solicit scholarly response papers directly and does not publish them frequently or with any regularity. According to Gura, this is simply because “very few

scholarly response papers are submitted.” When responses are submitted, their authors are required to meet general criteria which include meeting a certain page limit and being “brief and to the point.” Style is fairly formal, and titles have original flair. And unlike the Editor of *Applied Linguistics*, Gura reported that he had never refused to print a response because of language that could be construed as inappropriate, insulting, or overly intense; lack of organization, purpose, or focus; or any other reason.

Responses published in *EAL* are short, two pages long on average. Only about one-third of these responses were published alongside the original articles in the same issue, which could indicate the journal’s taste for a more spontaneous type of exchange. However, when asked whether he preferred to (a) solicit scholarly response papers as part of a controlled debate for a given issue or (b) publish unsolicited and perhaps unanticipated responses, Gura replied, “There are [very] few, so I don’t wish to generalize.” Gura did note, however, that the journal includes a forum called the “The Round Table” which “fulfills some of the purposes of a response (i.e. it allows scholars to speak to issues which are important to them in a form other than the formal essay.” The existence of such a forum—a much more general, yet similar outlet to the response forum—might also help to explain why *EAL* publishes so few responses in comparison to some of the other journals in this study.

In the case that included both a primary and a secondary response, both responses appeared in the same issue, indicating that the author of the original article had knowledge of the forthcoming criticism and time to prepare. Gura confirmed that when his journal did publish unsolicited responses, the writers of all the articles involved were notified by letter.

OVERALL RESPONSE TYPE

In general, responses published in *EAL* tend to be professional, scholarly, and to the point. Authors seem to respect the purpose of the response and use quotations, citations, and other types of solid additional information to support their arguments. As a twist, though, they are not always dispassionate (despite the fact that Gura's comments imply otherwise), and in some cases, one senses that the professionalism here is a veneer. Indeed, one could argue that authors in *EAL*, more than any other authors in this study, are capable of being sharply critical in an extremely subtle fashion.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS

"A 'COMPLAINT' AGAINST 'THE PETITION' OF BELINDA, AN AFRICAN SLAVE," E.W. PITCHER (1996)

This article is a primary response to Sharon M. Harris's "Whose Past Is It?: Women Writers in Early America" (1995). In it, Pitcher attempts to correct some erroneous statements in Harris's article concerning the historic validity and thus the possible interpretation of a document entitled "Petition of an African Slave."

Harris's tone is calm and even, at times, almost conversational. Her obvious curiosity about the future of her topic—a discussion of what the study of early American historical narratives can tell us both about history and about the lives of women—makes her more than dispassionate, but certainly not aggressive or heated. At first, Pitcher seems to echo Harris's tone:

Sharon M. Harris has addressed readers of *EAL* on the need to apply modern critical theory to the study of writers in this period, especially to include and develop fresh approaches to non-traditional narratives and transcribed oral narratives. Her *American Women Writers to 1800* (1996) provides further advice and makes available a wonderful variety of relevant texts. Among these is "Petition of an African Slave" (reprinted from the *The American Museum*,

June 1787), a work “important in literary history from several perspectives—as a rendering of oral literature; as an example of Romantic aesthetics beginning to appear in American narratives; and as Joanne Braxton has noted, as an important contribution to the rise of African-American women’s autobiographical narratives” [253]. (200)

When asked if they agreed that this calm conversational tone is an appropriate way for Pitcher to begin a successful exchange of information, one reader gave an unqualified “yes.” The other reader found “Pitcher’s response excellent, his tone effective,” but answered “no” because he wanted, “to resist the word ‘appropriate.’”

In the preceding passage, Pitcher seems gracious and to the point in his summary of Harris’s article, crediting her for the authorship of a book which includes *a wonderful variety of relevant texts*. However, he seems to become less cordial in the following passages:

Indeed, Harris is also confident that “As was common in the period, the legislature [of Massachusetts] took no action upon Belinda’s petition” (179), even though no evidence is given one way or the other.

The petition needs quite different handling if it is to be employed in some of the ways intended by Harris. There is an earlier and variant text that appeared in the British magazine *The Weekly Miscellany* (Sherborne) 2 No. 35 (1 September 1783): 207-8 (see my Appendix). As is obvious, the earlier text is a first-person narrative, a soliloquy rather than a petition, and entirely in keeping with scores of other fragments, rhapsodies, and soliloquies, in prose and verse. It seems as much a work of imagination, a fiction, as any of the group of works to which it belongs, excepting perhaps the reference in the earlier version to Belinda’s being raped as a child (13?) by a servant of her unnamed “master.” The “petition” in the *American Museum* leaves that detail out, and adds a name, a generic name, to the slaveholder. Isaac Royall (a slur against the avariciousness, Jewishness, and royalist sympathies of the “master”) is an American invention, as much as the petition must have been. (200-201)

To a degree, Pitcher seems to be violating the Maxim of Quantity, piling up counter-arguments until they seem to represent a personal attack on Harris’s scholarship. And both readers agreed that Pitcher emphasizes what he implies is a faulty conclusion on her part (she is *confident . . . even though* there is a lack of

evidence) while simultaneously stressing his own knowledge of the topic (*As is obvious*). However, they were divided when asked if they would characterize this implication as a subtle attack on Harris's scholarship. One responded "yes," but stated also that *attack* "might be too strong a characterization." The other reader replied, "No, it's a criticism, which I would distinguish from an attack. Therefore, this violation of the Maxim of Quantity would seem to have a limited negative affect on the overall success of the response.

But Pitcher seems to continue to use fact upon fact to invalidate Harris's interpretation, even after his case has been made,:

The possible influences, analogues, sources of inspiration for Belinda's soliloquy are too many to sift. The differences in wording in the two forms of the text also might imply an original in a language other than English. Again, further research is needed. This is, of course, a cautionary note which extends to the interpretations, the uses of this work by modern scholars and teachers who have accepted it as all, or any of the things Sharon Harris has claimed it to be. Not thinking it fiction, she would have been unlikely to have checked my *Fiction in American Magazines before 1800* (1993), where it is listed at A1996, and traced to its earlier form.¹ It is precisely for this reason that it is useful to provide readers of EAL with these facts, and with the earlier text, appended. (201)

The more facts Pitcher lists, the less knowledgeable Harris seems. Therefore, this criticism could be read as a personal attack, a violation of the Maxim of Quantity resulting in harmful overkill. However, it could simply be thorough scholarship on the part of Pitcher. When asked whether they read this criticism as (a) a personal attack, an act meant to embarrass or shame Harris to some degree, (b) thorough scholarship, or (c) a combination of both of these, both readers chose (b) thorough scholarship. Thus the implication would not be considered a violation of the Maxim of Quantity and would probably not affect the overall success of the response.

However, a final determinant in the personal attack/thorough scholarship debate might lie in the attitudinal verb of arguing *claim* as in *she claims it is, but as you can see this claim is false*. However, when asked if this use of *claim* in this context appeared to be a sign of personal attack on Harris's scholarship, both readers replied "no" since, as one commented, "claim is a common term for an argument, even a well-reasoned one."

Pitcher also seems to put a strong emphasis on his own work in this field (i.e. his reference to *my Fiction in American Magazines* instead of simply *Fiction in American Magazines*). And in a footnote, Pitcher points out that Harris *might also have corrected* certain other suggestions had she consulted *my catalogue* (201). This emphasis seems to suggest a more personal, less professional purpose and could indicate a violation of the general purpose of the scholarly response paper. But when asked if such statements might suggest that Pitcher has a more personal, less professional purpose in responding to Harris, one reader replied, "No, not necessarily. I'd say the clash here is between theoretical frameworks—discourse analysis vs. textual history." The other reader replied, "No, it would have been disingenuous for him to omit some indication that he refers to works he authored."

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations had a limited affect on the success of the response, while intense, negative verbs and a seemingly personal emphasis had no affect. However, positive stylistic elements such as calm conversational tone did seem to increase the success of the response.

Both readers rated this primary response successful overall, although they did note unsuccessful elements of the response. One reader stated that, "the shortcoming of Pitcher's piece is that he doesn't use his information to suggest connections with

Harris's framework, which he claims to respect." The other reader found that this response seemed to be "less a 'personal attack' than a reaction by a member of one scholarly generation and methodology against another whole generation's apparently not respecting his approach."

"EXCHANGE BETWEEN WILLIAM C. DOWLING AND RALPH BOWER [SIC],"
WILLIAM C. DOWLING (1996)

This article is a primary response to Ralph Bauer's "Colonial Discourse and Early American Literary History: Ercilla, the Inca Garcilaso, and Joel Barlow's Conception of a New World Epic" (1995). In it, Dowling attempts to correct what he believes to be Bauer's misquotation and misinterpretation of statements made in Dowling's *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut*. Because it is extremely short and the import of one passage often depends upon the presence of another, it appears here in its entirety:

In Ralph Bauer's "Colonial Discourse and Early American Literary History" (*EAL* 30:3, 203-32) he writes:

To be sure, Barlow, as William Dowling has shown, owed much to the British literary heritage of Augustan poetry. However, Barlow's extended treatment of the American landscape as well as the American indigenous past are far from "Being narrative digressions from the main narrative" (Dowling 115). . . . (205-6)

On page 115 of *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut*—specifically in the chapter on Joel Barlow where I am discussing the Manco Capec episode—I actually say this:

Nowhere more brilliantly than in the Manco Capec episode, *so often in commentary on Barlow's poetry considered to be a quasi-mythological digression from the main narrative*, does Barlow go to the very heart of the question of religion as ideology, exposing a contradiction written into the very assumptions of Connecticut georgic at the outset.

Go back for a second to the first passage. One sees that, given the brevity of the quoted phrase, a quite amazing number of things is going on here, viz., (1) a word ("narrative") is put in that isn't there in the original, (2) a singular

("digression") gets changed, in a way that alters the meaning, into the plural, and then, as a kind of coup de grâce, (3) the sense is reversed in something like the following way:

Dowling: From the look of things, there is absolutely no chance that it is going to rain on Thursday.

Bauer: Go ahead and pack the picnic basket. The weather service totally disagrees with Dowling's contention that "it is going to rain on Thursday."

Let me say that Mr. Bauer's references to *Poetry and Ideology* elsewhere in the article seem to me altogether of a piece with this. It would take a long winter's day to explain why what I mean by Barlow's "proto-Hegelianism" has nothing to do with what Mr. Bauer thinks he is arguing against, but the above may suggest why there turns out to be very little point of contact between his essay and my own views on Barlow's theory of progressive history. (197)

When asked if Dowling's tone appeared a bit biting in contrast to the calm, dispassionate tone of Bauer's original article, one reader said "yes," the other, "no, Dowling's response is foolish, but not because it's dispassionate or biting."

Had Dowling been satisfied with a simple comparison of quotes, he could have proved his point quite adequately, especially since he is obviously in the right. However, he seems to essentially interpret what could have been graciously excused as an accident on the part of Bauer as an intentional bad act. Such an unproved accusation could thus be interpreted as a violation of the Maxim of Quality. But when asked if they thought Dowling could have proved his point adequately with a simple comparison of quotes, the readers were divided, one replying "yes," one "no, because his 'point' has to do with his own work and the state of the field." Thus this particular violation of the Maxim of Quality would seem to have only a limited affect on the success of the response.

When asked if the use of verbs implying counter-factive author's stance such as *put* (*in*) and *alters* imply that Bauer has purposefully altered Dowling's meaning, one reader

replied “yes.” The other reader said no, but did point to an alternate negative implication, stating that Dowling uses these verbs to imply “sloppy scholarship.”

Then there is the insertion of a sarcastic dialogue which could on one hand constitute a violation of the Rules of Politeness, or a violation of the Maxim of Manner on the other, since such dialogue does not seem particularly professional or standard. But when asked if they thought the insertion of a sarcastic dialogue is appropriate in a professional scholarly context, readers were divided, one replying “yes,” the other, “no.” And when asked if they thought this sarcastic dialogue is overkill given that Dowling has already cited his complaints and criticized Bauer thoroughly (violation of the Maxim of Quantity), the reader who thought the dialogue was inappropriate agreed, while the reader who felt the dialogue was acceptable replied, “no, the dialogue is stupid because the original complaint is stupid.”

Finally, the last passage of Dowling’s response seems to contain another violation of the Maxim of Quantity; here, Dowling’s reference to erroneous statements *elsewhere in the article* implies that Bauer is guilty of poor scholarship without giving any further proof that this is the case. Both readers agreed with this assessment although one added that “Dowling is [again] foolish here, but I do not think it inappropriate in principle to refer to other errors without substantiation.” Thus one would assume that, in spite of the second reader’s qualification, this violation of the Maxim of Quantity would have more of an effect on the overall success of the response.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations seemed to have a limited effect on the success of the response, as did violation of the Rules of Politeness; however, the use of intense, negative verbs had a more significant affect. Other negative stylistic elements such as the use of a somewhat biting tone also had a limited effect.

Overall, one reader found this primary response unsuccessful, the other very unsuccessful. The reader who found the response simply unsuccessful did add that it was “successful” up to a point since it did point out a legitimate error (a misquotation) in Bauer’s original article.

“RALPH BAUER’S RESPONSE TO WILLIAM C. DOWLING,” RALPH BAUER (1996)

This article is a secondary response to William C. Dowling’s primary response, which appears under the title “Exchange Between William C. Dowling and Ralph Bower [sic]” (1996). In it, Bauer apologizes for misquoting Dowling and tries again to clarify points which he believes Dowling has misunderstood.

In general, Bauer’s tone seems as calm and professional in this article as it does in his original article. Consider the following passage:

First I would like to apologize to Professor Dowling for having misquoted his words on pages 205-206 of my article and for having accidentally taken them out of the context in which they appear on page 115 of *Poetry and Ideology*. I should remind Professor Dowling, however, that on page 114 of his book he does make reference, in his own voice, to Barlow’s “long narrative digression concerning Manco Capece in both *The Vision* and *The Columbiad*.” Nevertheless, I thank him for bringing to my attention the erroneous conflation of these two passages in my article. (198)

Here, Bauer seems to be the epitome of professionalism; he apologizes for his error, thanks Dowling for catching it, and later provides a correction of the offending passage. Both readers agreed that these actions helped Bauer to promote successful communication. But Bauer also seems to stand his ground politely, managing to reassert his opinion without sounding accusative. When asked if they thought these actions made Bauer a more successful communicator, one reader said yes, the other thought that these actions *were* accusative, but politely so, “which is what makes this successful.” Consider another passage from this response:

Second, the question of whether or not we want to label Barlow's historical thought "proto-hegelian" is indeed (as Professor Dowling has rightly observed) of secondary significance to what I "think" the argument of my essay is. But I would like to clarify here my brief reference to Professor Dowling's concept and stress that I did not argue against his contentions that, in Barlow, "somewhat as in Hegel," History becomes "aware of its progressive character" (*P & I* 109) or even that both secularize the telos of history, conceiving it as "an inner imperative driving events at the objective level to a higher and higher realization of rational freedom" (*P & I* 109-10). Having established these similarities, however, we should not forget that Barlow and Hegel conceptualized their respective theories of history in the process of struggles with historio-culturally distinct ideological problems. (198)

By avoiding the use of intense language, this passage seems to illustrate that scholars can hold different opinions without being (or appearing) disrespectful or uncivil. Bauer makes it clear that he does not *argue* with Dowling even though he may have a different interpretation of *distinct ideological problems*. When asked if they agreed with this assessment, one reader said yes, the other "no," that it simply illustrates that "the stakes are small."

Bauer does seem to have one negative reaction to Dowling's sharpness in the following passage:

It was not the purpose of my article to reverse Professor Dowling's reading of Barlow, which, I think, has taught us much about Revolutionary ideology. I did hope to illustrate, however, that Barlow owed not only to the (European) tradition of the English Opposition poets, but also to another ("early American") literary history. Surely, this literary history must always be seen in *the context of* an emerging system of various pan-Atlantic cultures (British America, Spanish America, etc.) but is not therefore *the same* as its European counterpart in this Atlantic context. It is in the light of this distinction that the point of contact Professor Dowling can hardly discern (or appreciate) between his book and my argument about Barlow's epic poetry may become apparent in our divergent readings of Barlow's notion of *translatio* which, in my view, does not simply make for Americans as the "true Englishmen" (*P & I* 49; see also note 31 of my article). (199)

As this passage illustrates, Bauer's tone seems to remain professional and dispassionate almost until the end. When asked if they thought Bauer's continued respect and

deference for Dowling's research was explicit in statements like *It was not the purpose of my article to reverse Professor Dowling's reading of Barlow, which, I think, has taught us much about Revolutionary ideology*, both readers replied "yes." However, personal frustration seems to emerge in the negative attitudinal verbs of cognition *can hardly discern (or appreciate)*, the implication being that Dowling is not capable of doing such things, which to a scholar would be insulting. But when asked if they would interpret Bauer's statements in this way, both readers replied, "no." And when asked if such remarks would be appropriate in a professional scholarly context if they had been personally insulting to a scholar (violating Rules of Politeness), readers were divided, one replying "yes," the other "no."

General Diagnosis: In this case, the use of intense, negative verbs did not have an adverse impact on the success of the response, while violations of the Rules of Politeness and the use of intense language had a limited affect. However, positive stylistic elements such as apologizing for error, offering correction, and showing respect and deference for a peer, had a decidedly positive affect, while asserting opinions without being accusative and using a civil tone had more limited positive affects.

When asked how they would rate this secondary response overall, one respondent called it successful, the other, very successful.

CHAPTER FOUR SUMMARY

Given that factors concerning general information, publication statistics, and overall response tone indicated an orderly dispassionate approach to criticism, and perhaps even a distaste for public criticism, I expected members of the *Early American Literature* discourse community to be extremely sensitive to violations of Grice's

Maxims, the use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of generally intense language. And yet, one of the readers for this section was one of only two in the entire study to disagree with Altick and Fenstermaker's assertion that "controversial points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility" (253). This reader commented that:

While the premises of your introduction are unobjectionable—that scholars generally agree that there are rules which govern responses to criticism and that, furthermore, there should be rules—I object to Altick/Fenstermaker's conflation of rules of response and criticism with historically specific forms of behavior (and in fact do not like the "dialogue" analogy, or the [very different] "communication flow" image), and would emphasize instead rules of cognition and "projects" (in the broadest sense) of knowledge.

This reader's "resistance" helped produced some unexpected results, and only a larger survey sample would reveal whether or not a significant number of scholars in this field share his views.

Thus overall, as far as this study is concerned, Maxim violations seemed to have the most significant negative affect on the overall success of the response. The use of intense negative verbs had a less adverse affect. Finally, violations of the Rules of the Politeness and the use of intense language seemed to have a significant negative affect, but because such violations and such language appeared infrequently in the *EAL* responses, it is difficult to draw a strong conclusion regarding their potential negative affects on a larger scale.

Still, numerous Maxim violations, intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense language did not always seem to be a factor in the overall success of the response; both the Pitcher and the Dowling responses exhibited examples of several of these, and the former was successful, the latter unsuccessful.

What seemed to be the deciding factor in these cases was a tonal difference, more calm and conversational in the case of Pitcher, more biting in the case of Dowling.

However, the Bauer response, which exhibited an extremely limited instance of intense negative verbs and general language intensity with an overwhelming amount of positive stylistic elements such as apologizing for error and respect and deference for the critic, was clearly successful. So while it is difficult at this stage to argue that Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense language have the power in and of themselves to render an *EAL* response unsuccessful, it does seem safe to conclude that they do not have this power as long as they are well-balanced by positive stylistic elements.

CHAPTER FIVE: *JOURNAL OF TECHNICAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATION*

GENERAL INFORMATION

The *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication (JTWC)* is a quarterly publication. Along with *Technical Communication Quarterly*, it is an excellent resource for scholars in this field. Both of the readers in this section agreed that it is a highly-respected—or at the very least important—journal in their field, and that writers published here have a stake in making a good impression on their readers.

According to its mission statement, it has “served for over twenty-three years as a major professional and scholarly journal of practitioners and teachers of most functional forms of communication, here and abroad” (i). As such, it publishes articles related to

functional writing, both theoretical and practical, on a wide range of subjects: audience analysis; CAI, CAD/CAM; communication (technical and scientific, organizational, business, intercultural, visual, multimedia); communication management; desktop publishing; hardware and software documentation; on-line documentation; design; pedagogy; research in writing; rhetoric; technical journalism; theory (visual communication, design, rhetorical, linguistic, information, textual, ethnographic, reading); user documentation; and word processing. (i)

PUBLICATION STATISTICS

Only two response sets were published in *JTWC* between 1986 and 1996. Both of these included primary and secondary responses.

Unfortunately, the Editor of *JTWC* declined to complete the questionnaire concerning scholarly response paper publications in his journal, so the information in this and subsequent sections is based on external observation. *JTWC* does not solicit scholarly response papers directly and, like *Applied Linguistics* and *Early American Literature*, does not publish them frequently or with any regularity. This may be due to

any number of factors such as the journal's emphasis on publishing research articles, an unwillingness on the part of authors to offer criticism in print, etc. When they do appear, it is sometimes, sometimes not, under the heading "Commentary." Style is fairly formal, and titles have original flair. As in *Applied Linguistics*, the responses in *JTWC* are relatively long, seven pages on the average. Responses *never* appear alongside original articles in this journal, indicating, perhaps, a more spontaneous approach to exchange.

An average of one and a half years separated the publication of the original article and the primary response, while an average of one year separated the publication of primary and secondary responses. The time lapse between the publication of the original article and the primary response is the longest of any journal in this study. Furthermore, *JTWC* is the only journal in this study where no secondary responses are published alongside primary responses. This would probably indicate that the author of the secondary response has ample time to frame his reply.

OVERALL RESPONSE TYPE

For the most part, the responses published in *JTWC* are extremely organized and to the point and offer a great deal of detailed information important to the successful exchange of information; in this way, they have a lot in common with the responses published in *AL*. However, they tend to have a certain raw quality, a bluntness one might say, that distinguishes them both from the cooler, more scientific responses published in *AL* and the more polished, more subtly critical responses published in *EAL*.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS

“GRAMMAR AND TECHNICAL WRITING,” K. SCOTT FERGUSON AND FRANK PARKER (1990)

This article is a primary response to R.A. Harris’s “Linguistics, Technical Writing, and Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar” (1988). In it, Ferguson and Parker challenge Harris’s claim that a certain linguistic theory, Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (GPSG), is useful in teaching and analyzing technical writing. More specifically, Ferguson and Parker assert that Harris’s defense of the merits of GPSG over those of another theory, Transformational Grammar (TG), is only comprehensible to linguists, thus not of much use to the technical writing teachers who are the audience. Instead, the authors recommend and demonstrate what they consider more accessible linguistic theories.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the tone of Harris’s original article is professional, scholarly, and calm, although it is a little meandering and flowery as well (both readers agreed with this assessment). Readers also agreed that in contrast, Ferguson and Parker’s tone is blunt and unadorned—professional, but much more brisk and to the point, which readers agreed was an appropriate style to use in a professional scholarly context.

Ferguson and Parker begin their response with a general agreement with Harris’s premise:

We agree completely with Harris that linguistics is useful for solving many of the problems encountered in teaching and analyzing technical writing. In fact, a number of recent articles have used linguistic theory to offer insight into seemingly intractable problems in technical writing: for example, presupposition has been applied to problems in tone [2]; conversational implicature has been applied to negative messages in business correspondence [3]; speech act theory has been applied to politeness in letters of request [4]; and, finally, distinctive

feature theory has been applied to differentiate both between literary and technical discourse [5] and among types of technical graphics [6]. (357-358)

When asked if they believed beginning the response with a general agreement with Harris's premise set the tone for a successful professional exchange, both readers said yes.

However, after making a professional "bow" to Harris, Ferguson and Parker seem to become brusque as well as brisk, as in the following passage:

In short, we feel that Harris' paper is emblematic of the misguided attempts to apply linguistics to writing that date back to the 1960s. On the one hand, he confronts the reader (a technical writing specialist) with an overwhelming amount of unnecessary linguistic formalism and arcana. From this perspective, Harris tells the reader TOO MUCH. On the other hand, he fails to show in sufficient detail how the theory can be applied to concrete problems in technical writing. From this perspective, Harris tells the reader TOO LITTLE. Our purpose, then, will be, first, to go over some of the fundamental flaws in Harris' presentation and, second, to use the passive construction to illustrate how linguistics can be used to advantage by technical writing teachers and researchers. (358)

This passage seems to reflect an excess of high language intensity: Harris's attempt is *misguided*, his presentation *flaw[ed]*, and he *fails* to show *sufficient* detail. Such intense terms piled upon one another seem to make this dangerously close to a critique of the author, not the idea, as is the purpose of the response. Indeed, readers agreed that this is the case.

However, in spite of their use of high intensity language, the respondents thoroughly support every argument they make. One can begin to see their excellent job of backing up claims in the following passage:

First of all, Harris spends ten out of thirteen pages trying to explicate fine-grained theoretical differences between GPSG and TG.¹ However, as we mentioned before, not one of the applications that Harris mentions in the last few pages of his article crucially depends upon any distinction between GPSG and TG. Moreover, even though there certainly are theoretical distinctions between GPSG and TG, it is not clear that any of these differences would hold

any interest or relevance for a technical writing specialist. In fact, Harris himself remarks in his conclusion, “All this may look like a good deal of trouble to arrive at a few diagnostics that could be learned by rote and a little precision that isn’t especially practical” [1, p. 238]. We agree. (358-359)

Here, Ferguson and Parker use Harris’s own conclusions to support their own. This would seem to be an extremely pragmatic move. Being able to support their own arguments with their opponent’s statements makes it unlikely that the critics’ claims are totally unfounded. But when asked whether the authors’ thorough support of their arguments helps keep their response unbiased and professional, and thus successful, readers were divided, one saying “yes,” the other “no.”

Ferguson and Parker also back up their claims with examples and citations from Harris’s original argument, as in the following passage:

Second, Harris introduces dozens of jargon terms that he never explains². . . A noteworthy example of Harris’ problem with assessing his audience’s level of expertise is his explanation of “intensional logic.” He introduces this term—again, gratuitously, since his argument in no way hinges on an understanding of this concept—and then goes on to explain it in a footnote, where he says that expressions of intensional logic “are convenient intermediaries for more elaborate representations of denotation sets” [p. 234]. In short, then, it is difficult for us to imagine any technical writing teacher or researcher who could get a great deal of substance from Harris’ discussion of GPSG *vis a vis* TG. (359)

Note that although *gratuitously* is indeed an intense term, Ferguson and Harris’s point—that phrases like *convenient intermediaries for more elaborate representations of denotation sets* are much too jargonistic to benefit an audience of technical writing teachers—seems to be a valid one. Asked, then, if they thought that Ferguson and Parker’s use of examples and citations from Harris’s original argument is a good way for the respondents to argue successfully without stooping to personal attack, both readers said yes. Thus this passage seems to be another example of this response’s mixture of successful and unsuccessful methods, proof by example on the one hand,

negative language intensity on the other. And this dualism continues right up until the final passage:

In sum we agree with Harris that linguistic theory is useful for solving certain problems encountered in technical writing theory and pedagogy. However, Harris undermines his purpose by introducing irrelevant distinctions between GPSG and TG and by failing to exploit the full potential of the few applications he does mention. The passive rule is a case in point. It provides an operational test for identifying passive sentences and for rearranging both thematic roles and given and new information. (366)

As in the first passage, Ferguson and Parker cite agreement with Harris, thus ending on a professional, diplomatic note. However, this diplomacy is coupled, again, with high language intensity terms (*irrelevant*), verbs which imply negative author's stance (*fails*), and verbs which imply counter-factive writer's stance (*undermines*). Asked if they thought that this response would have been *more* successful if the respondents had abandoned this dualism for a stronger diplomatic tone, both readers said yes.

General Diagnosis: In this case, the use of intense, negative verbs and general language intensity both had an adverse affect on the success of the response. However, numerous positive stylistic elements such as a brisk, to-the-point style; beginning the critique with general agreement; and using examples and citations from the original article had a definite positive affect. Other positive stylistic elements such as the thorough support of arguments had a more limited positive affect.

Both readers found this primary response successful overall. One reader stated that he liked "the directness and specificity of Ferguson and Parker, but they could have been less aggressively direct, more tactful." The other commented that "the response succeeded in raising doubts about Harris's work" and had "the authors been able to resist an apparent need to make Harris' argument appear foolish . . . it would have been more convincing."

“A RESPONSE TO K. SCOTT FERGUSON AND FRANK PARKER’S ‘GRAMMAR AND TECHNICAL WRITING,’” R.A. HARRIS (1992)

This article is, of course, a secondary response to Ferguson and Parker’s “Grammar and Technical Writing.” Because it was the impetus of this study, and as such has been discussed in some detail, especially in Chapter Two, this chapter offers only a general diagnosis.

General Diagnosis: In this case, frequent Maxim violations, use of negative intense verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of extremely intense language all pointed to an unsuccessful response.

One reader found this secondary response unsuccessful, the other very unsuccessful overall, adding that “while Harris’ response is understandable, it doesn’t succeed in convincing me that he has a firm grasp of linguistics. His defense should not be that he is a scholar, but that his theory has scholarly merit. His response degenerates the ‘debate’ to the level of a schoolyard squabble.”

“COMMENTARY ON RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF WILLIAM HARVEY’S *DE MOTU CORDIS* (1628),” J.T.H. CONNOR AND JENNIFER J. CONNOR (1992)

This article is a primary response to Jo Allen’s “Thematic Repetition as Rhetorical Technique” (1991). In it, the Connors question Allen’s analysis of a seventeenth century medical treatise by William Harvey about the circulation of the blood, entitled *De Motu Cordis*. More specifically, the authors question many of the connections Allen makes between Harvey’s use of thematic repetition, his religious beliefs, and the organization of his text.

While Allen’s original article seems clear, professional, and dispassionate, the Connors’ primary response seems almost harshly passionate in spots although this is

difficult to tell initially. The authors begin their response, much as Ferguson and Parker do, with an extension of professional agreement in the form of a commendation:

The author's attempt to analyze a historical document from the point of view of its communication competence should be commended as potentially benefiting two disciplines—technical communication and history of medicine. Unfortunately, however, the article suffers in ways not uncommon when researchers cross over into another discipline. For instance, although the author of this study of Harvey, Jo Allen, claimed originality for it—observing in the abstract that “little attention has been paid” to Harvey's work—many important studies on both Harvey's writing and on his use of the circle metaphor have, in fact, appeared in major journals in the history of medicine [2-5]. More importantly, Allen's own discussion does little to advance our knowledge of Harvey's treatise and contains several flaws in its interpretive framework as well as in its stylistic observations. (195)

Here, as in the first Ferguson and Parker example, the authors seem to move quickly from professional politeness to brusqueness. First, the Connors' use of the attitudinal verb of arguing *claim[ed]* in this context implies that perhaps Allen's arguments are not based solidly in research, and perhaps this is even connected to her ego (thus her personal desire for *originality*). Such an implication could indeed be classified as a violation of the Maxim of Quality, inappropriate in this context since it is one that cannot be proved and could be considered an attack on the integrity of a scholar. When asked if they thought the Connors' use of the verb *claim[ed]* in this context implies that perhaps Allen's arguments are not based solidly in research, both readers said yes. However, when asked if such an implication is appropriate in this context—since it is one which cannot be proved and could be considered an attack on the integrity of a scholar—readers were divided, one replying “yes,” the other “no.” Thus we cannot be sure of this violation's affect on the overall success of the response.

In addition, though, this negative implication seems to be followed by a supporting dose of language intensity; not only is Allen rather dishonest but her discussion has

several flaws in more than one area. Therefore this implication could be considered a little too personally focussed for a professional context. When asked if they agreed with this assessment, readers were again divided, one replying “yes,” the other, “no.”

Implications regarding Allen’s integrity seem to continue to appear throughout the Connors’ response, as in the next passage. In this passage, the Connors take exception to Allen’s remark that in Harvey’s treatise, as in other documents, techniques such as thematic repetition “may also work to make ideas acceptable. For in addition to explaining, science must convince, and the failure to make a concept both understandable and agreeable will surely lead to the concept’s failure as a replacement solution in some part of the universe’s puzzle” (29):

It is beyond the scope of this commentary to examine the literature of at least three separate academic disciplines, but suffice it to say that since they exist, there must be numerous examples of a concept’s “success” despite problems with its communication (for example, see [17]). Conversely, one might ask how many 17th-century treatises were equally “understandable and agreeable” to their readers, but failed nonetheless to provide “a replacement solution in some part of the universe’s great puzzle” [1, p. 29] in the long run? Overall, Allen’s skewed account ignores the fact that many other factors greatly influenced the spread of newer ideas, including, as Elizabeth Eisenstein has eloquently argued, the sheer physical impact of printing scientific treatises [18]. (197)

Not only do the Connors disagree with Allen, they seem to disagree intensely; dismissing her argument they declare it *skewed*, which both readers agreed was a strong comment to make concerning the work of another professional scholar. And both readers further agreed that the use of a verb which implies counter-factive writer’s stance, *ignore*, casts further shadow on the quality of Allen’s assertions.

In the next passage, the Connors disagree with assertions based on a translation of Harvey’s work:

Thus, Allen’s observation that Harvey “doesn’t stop to take a breath—which might give readers a chance to oppose his ideas [1, p. 35] may be wrong simply

because translators have used artistic license to make sense of a problematic Latin text or to adapt the text for their contemporary readers. Taking Allen's argument a step further, beyond the sentence level, to conclude that Harvey buried his ideas between "innocuous introductory and concluding sentences" in one paragraph, which itself "mirrors the organization of the entire work" [1, pp. 35-36] is moreover, without justification. Indeed, it is alarming that anyone would make dogmatic statements about *Harvey's* organization of a paragraph when it is the *translator's* organization that one is, in fact, analyzing. (198)

Both readers agreed that *alarming* seems to be a little too intense here since in this context it seems to imply that Allen is in some way out-of-control. They also agreed that *dogmatic* also seems too intense and really even false (violates Maxim of Quality) given the logical tone of Allen's original article.

And in the final paragraph of the Connors' response, as in the final paragraph of the Ferguson and Parker response, the authors seem to aspire to a more diplomatic tone, while continuing to use intense language:

Overall, then, the argument that the metaphor of circles, with its "thematic repetition as rhetorical technique," helped cohere Harvey's treatise on the circulation of the blood no doubt has some merit. However, what could have been a cogently argued essay on Harvey's use of circles and other rhetorical strategies for convincing a conservative audience has instead turned out to be an exercise in discovery for the author. To conclude from this that Harvey was a "clever rhetorician" is unoriginal, and in the end circular—the author should have started with this observation as the acknowledged premise. (199)

Note that in spite of their admission that Allen's argument has *merit*, the Connors do not find the argument *cogent*, but an *unoriginal exercise in discovery*. Both readers felt that this is overly intense language because it produces some intense condescension.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations seemed to have a significant negative affect on the success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs and general language intensity.

Both readers felt that this response seems almost harshly passionate, and thus disproportionate, given that Allen's original article seems clear, professional, and

dispassionate. Yet they were divided concerning the overall success of this primary response. One found it clearly unsuccessful, the other successful due to certain positive stylistic elements, such as a “particularly cogent” point about translation.

“A RESPONSE TO J.T.H. CONNOR AND JENNIFER J. CONNOR’S ANALYSIS,”
JO ALLEN (1992)

This article is a secondary response to J.T.H. and Jennifer J. Connor’s
“Commentary on Rhetorical Analysis of William Harvey’s *De Motu Cordis* (1628)”
(1992). In it, Allen attempts to address the Connors’ numerous criticisms in an effort to
reestablish the validity of her arguments.

While the tone of the Connors’ primary response seems sharply brusque, reflecting
definite passionate intent, the tone of Allen’s secondary response seems polite and
dispassionate by comparison, as seen in the opening passage:

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to criticisms of my article on William
Harvey, published over a year ago in the *Journal of Technical Writing and
Communication*. I am pleased that the work has garnered some attention, and
that the Connors have contributed to the discussion, which is, I hope we all
agree, the point of scholarship. The Connors and I agree, in fact, on many
points—especially on the importance of studying historical samples of technical
and scientific communication. (203)

Both readers agreed that Allen’s tone of professional cordiality turns what could be a
situation of extreme personal affront into an opportunity for the scholarly sharing of
ideas. She *appreciate[s]* this opportunity, she is *pleased* with the Connors critical
attention, and she is glad they have made *a contribution to the discussion*, because, as
she rightly points out, such exchanges are *the point of scholarship*. She even chooses to
align herself with her critics, citing agreement *on many points*. Both readers agreed
that all of this makes her appear much more unbiased and professional than the
Connors, which in the end makes her arguments more persuasive.

One of these techniques, though, agreeing to disagree, seems especially effective in the scholarly exchange of ideas, and Allen uses it often throughout her response, as in the next passage:

I agree, first, with the Connors about the overwhelming nature of crossover studies—in this case, a crossover between not only technical communication and the history of medicine, as the Connors point out, but also among language studies, history, philosophy, history of science, history of medicine, rhetoric, astronomy, and medicine. If I erred by ignoring any of these fields in my research, I must remind my readers that the purpose of my article was not to reconcile all these fields through a brief analysis of a single chapter of Harvey's *De Motu Cordis*. The purpose of the article was, on the contrary, rather simple: to support, using Harvey's work as evidence, the idea that metaphor(s) can be more persuasive when used as a basis for thematic repetition than when used solely to introduce a scientific concept. (203)

Notice how Allen first cites agreement with one of the Connors' statements. Both readers agreed that this takes the "sting" out of the disagreement which immediately follows regarding the Connors' misunderstanding of Allen's purpose, calmly restated by Allen as *to support, using Harvey's work as evidence, the idea that metaphor(s) can be more persuasive when used as a basis for thematic repetition than when used solely to introduce a scientific concept*. When asked if they thought agreeing to disagree, or balancing disagreement with agreement, is an effective way to promote the successful exchange of ideas, both readers said yes.

Another way that Allen supports her views in the face of the Connors' criticisms is by mentioning the agreement of well-known researchers of related topics and by using cool logic to support the soundness of her arguments:

The Connors also take exception to my argument (and the cited arguments of James Stephens and Thomas Kuhn) that well written scientific arguments are more persuasive than poorly written ones. Challenging a critical tenet of what we teach about audience analysis, clarity, and persuasiveness, the Connors argue that "there must be" ideas that have caught on "despite problems with . . . communication." Perhaps. But logic tells us that somewhere, someone must have been able to take that poorly written communication and make it more

accessible to the people (scientists, technologists, or other experts) who would eventually accept the concept as sensible. (205)

Both readers agreed that such a tactic allows Allen to support her views successfully without attacking the Connors personally. Furthermore, the readers agreed that although this appeal to logic does not seem aimed at ridiculing the Connors' lack of said quality, the calmness of the statement does make them seem a little over-passionate in their criticism.

Yet another way Allen deflects the Connors' criticism is by agreeing with their concerns about an issue, then establishing her own knowledge in the area, another tactic the readers found to be an appropriate and successful way of deflecting criticism. For example, when the Connors' question the validity of remarks based on a certain translation of *De Motu Cordis*, Allen points to her role as a proponent of getting technical communicators to address the issues surrounding translations of historically significant scientific and technical documents (*evidenced by my proposals on just this topic for professional conferences* [206-207]). She also proves the validity of her remarks about organization by providing readers with a comparison of the same passages from different translations of the same text, pointing out that:

Though there is a modest switch in order of ideas, a careful reading proves that the shift affects neither the meaning of the passage nor my point about Harvey's "attention to consistency in direction" and his map of "the path the blood travels throughout the heart—always in the same direction, leading to the completed circle" [21, p. 34]. (207-208)

The final passages of Allen's response are devoted to correcting a misunderstanding concerning the "conclusion" of her original article. She does this by making a clear distinction in terms:

Finally, I'd like to address my ending, not, as the Connors suggest, my conclusion that Harvey was a "clever rhetorician" [21, p. 38]. . . . I am

unfamiliar with any article that titles its last section “Ending,” but to mistake an ending for a conclusion is to misunderstand the meaning of “conclusion” in scholarly terms, a problematic fallacy for any writer who equates the two terms.

Had I intended to prove only that Harvey was a clever rhetorician, the work would have required a great deal more evidence than a discussion of his use of circles as thematic repetitions, and I probably would have titled the work “Harvey: Clever Rhetorician,” and it surely would not have been published.
(208)

Note that the Connors are not singled out here: this *mistake* is a problem for *any writer who equates the two terms*. Readers agreed that refraining from singling out the Connors in this way is a good way to promote successful communication.

Note also, though, the echo of sarcasm in Allen’s statement of an alternate title and her subtle implication that if her article had been as shallow, as simplistic, as the Connors seem to imply, it never would have made it into print; *ergo* the Connors are wrong. Both readers recognized this statement as sarcasm, but were divided about whether it violates the Rules of Politeness in this professional scholarly context. However, this is only one of two or three instances where Allen shows a hint of personal insult, which seems negligible when compared to the intensity of the Connors’ criticism. And given that it is a rare instance, the reader who did consider it a violation of the Rules of Politeness did not consider it an infraction with serious consequences for Allen’s professional credibility.

General Diagnosis: In this case, violation of the Rules of Politeness had only a limited affect on the overall success of the response. This may because of the noticeable absence of other negative variables and the presence of many positive stylistic elements such as professional cordiality; citing agreement on points; agreeing to disagree; using outside evidence and cool logic; establishing knowledge about the

critics' concerns; using comparisons of passages as proof; making clear distinctions in terms; and avoiding singling out critics by name.

One reader found this secondary response successful, the other very successful overall, adding that it “contributes to the academic dialogue in the field, because she [Allen] responds to the issues, rather than cast[ing] aspersions on the professional integrity of the Connors. Even her most egregious lapse into sarcasm avoids direct confrontation with the Connors.”

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY

Given factors concerning general information, publication statistics, and overall response tone, I expected members of the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* discourse community to be sensitive to violations of Grice's Maxims, the use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of generally intense language. But I also predicted that the negative impact of these would be softened in a response which offered organized, sound proof as part of the critique. This was in fact the case. Overall, Maxim violations had a significant negative affect on the success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and general language intensity. Yet a response which exhibited several examples of these (e.g. Connors) was found successful overall by at least one reader due to certain “cogent” points.

Still, responses with a high number of maxim violations, intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and general language intensity (e.g. Harris) tended to be unsuccessful, while those which avoided these elements, either to a large degree or entirely (e.g. Allen), were most successful. Successful responses also tended to employ

a more positive set of stylistic elements such as beginning the critique with a general agreement; using examples and citations from the text being critiqued; making clear distinctions in terms; and avoiding singling out critics by name.

CHAPTER SIX: COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

College Composition and Communication (CCC) is a quarterly publication. It is well-known in to scholars in composition/rhetoric and is respected by teachers and researchers alike. All four readers in this section agreed that it is a highly-respected—or at the very least important—journal in their field, and that writers published here have some stake in making a good impression on their readers. *CCC* provides “a forum for critical work on the study and teaching of teaching and writing at the college level” and publishes articles concerning a variety of topics, as described in its mission statement (i):

Some articles focus directly on teaching practices, other locate those practices in their historical and institutional contexts, still others connect current work in composition studies to that going on elsewhere in English and related fields—among them literacy studies, critical theory, cultural studies, education, ethnography, communication, philosophy of language, and rhetoric. Many articles in *CCC* attempt to blur genres and mix discourses, to cut across and make connections among a range of intellectual and professional issues. (i)

PUBLICATION STATISTICS

Approximately 32 response sets were published in *CCC* between 1986 and 1996. Eight of these included only primary responses, but the remaining 24 included both primary and secondary responses. When asked why he thought scholarly response papers appeared with greater frequency in his journal than in the journals of other English sub-fields, Editor Joseph Harris replied, “I’m a little cautious about guessing at the motives of authors in the field,” and exhibited some surprise and interest in the fact that “the scholarly response paper is a more salient feature of discourse in comp than in

other fields.” And when asked why in particular he thought so many of *CCC*’s sets included secondary responses, Harris indicated that it was simply because the authors of the original articles had been invited to respond.

CCC does not directly solicit scholarly response papers, but it does publish them fairly frequently, so often in fact, that they appear in a special section. This section was called “Counterstatement” in the 1986-1993 volumes and became “Interchanges” sometime during the 1993-1994 period. The style of *CCC* responses hovers between formal and informal; it is less formal, for example than that of *Applied Linguistics*, but more formal than that of *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. Titles are more functional than original, drawing from the names and titles of the other authors and articles involved.

CCC responses are three pages long on average. Only about one-tenth of the primary responses were published alongside the original articles in the same issue; an average of one year separated the publication of the original article and the primary response. However, all secondary responses were published alongside the primary responses, indicating that the author of the original article had some knowledge of the forthcoming criticism and time to prepare. Harris confirmed that when his journal publishes unsolicited responses, the writers of the articles involved are informed by a letter which invites them to respond.

When asked whether he preferred to (a) solicit responses as part of a controlled debate for a given issue, or (b) publish unsolicited and perhaps unanticipated responses, Harris indicated no preference, but replied that he did do both. Harris also noted that he had declined to print several responses on several occasions, but not due to factors such

as inappropriate or intense language or lack of purpose or organization; his reasons were “lack of timeliness and/or interest/pointedness,” and he did offer to publish these responses after revision.

Unlike *Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, and the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, CCC did print some responses which did not fit the definition given in Chapters One and Three and thus were not considered for the analytical part of this study. However, there were only two of these between 1986 and 1996, and they seem to be atypical for a special purpose. For example, one response set does not fit the definition because the primary respondent is anonymous. But the anonymity is most likely a political statement since the author is responding to Beth Daniell’s “Composing (As) Power” (1994), an article which raises ethical questions concerning using groups such as Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous as literary research sites¹.

The other set seems to be aimed at establishing a broad discussion forum. It has its foundation in two original articles by two well-known composition scholars (i.e. “Writing With Teachers” by David Bartholomae [1995] and “Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic” by Peter Elbow [1995]). Then each of these authors responds to the other’s original article, and the responses are published alongside the original articles. Finally, other writers submit primary responses aimed not at one original article or the other, but at concepts discussed in each; these primary responses are also published alongside the original articles².

OVERALL RESPONSE TYPE

In general, responses published in *CCC* seem to exhibit a more self-conscious sense of community, of cooperation, than those published in *Applied Linguistics*, *Early American Literature*, or the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*. They tend to be organized, but do not typically contain the exhaustive amounts of information present in *AL* and *JTWC* responses. Neither do they exhibit the same sort of professional veneer observed in *EAL* responses; however, most *CCC* respondents, despite the overall tone of their responses, seem to go out of their way to stress appreciation for the opportunity to participate in a scholarly exchange and respect for fellow participants.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS

“RESPONSE TO KATHLEEN E. WELCH, ‘IDEOLOGY AND FRESHMAN TEXTBOOK PRODUCTION,’” KEVIN DAVIS (1988)

This article is a primary response to Kathleen E. Welch’s “Ideology and Freshman Textbook Production: The Place of Theory in Writing Pedagogy.” In it, Davis seems to mirror Welch’s tone, agreeing with Welch’s findings regarding the importance of having textbooks which support current composition theory, but calmly and dispassionately arguing the primary importance of other factors as well:

Professor Welch’s main points—that writing textbooks represent an unstated ideology which oppose composition theory, and that we need to move from standard texts to student-produced texts—are well stated. I applaud her efforts to blow the whistle on this subtle conspiracy between the buyers and sellers of textbooks. I’m afraid however, that asking the textbook companies to change composition instruction is like asking the tail to wag the dog. The modes, canons, and excerpts she mentions are manifest in current-traditional composition instruction: writing is form-centered; students learn to write by emulating accepted examples; the value of a piece of writing is in the text’s adherence to accepted forms. This writing class structure—with the teacher and

the written artifacts at the center, and the student writer on the fringe—is itself the real problem. (236)

Notice Davis's supportive terminology: Welch's points are *well stated*, and he *applauds* her efforts. Agreeing with Welch in this way seems to make it possible for Davis to be *afraid* to completely accept Welch's opinions without seeming overly aggressive or self-serving and thus to communicate openly and successfully. However, one reader disagreed with this assessment, and the other "did not understand" it. And when asked if they thought Davis's agreement gently paves the way for the assertion of his additional argument that *writing class structure . . . is itself the real problem*, one reader said yes, the other no.

Davis seems to repeat this technique—balancing his support for Welch's arguments while stating his own—in subsequent passages:

Professor Welch also points out, accurately I believe, that the textbooks are for the instructors and not for the students. Because of the textbooks, Welch claims, "writing teachers are invited to teach writing as stasis" (271). But the problem is not that the textbooks make this invitation; it is that colleges and universities insist on sending untrained individuals into composition classrooms, individuals who, because of their innocence, are susceptible to this invitation. Most of us first learned to teach composition by teaching composition, and the textbook was the only resource we had. . . . the problem isn't completely in these prescriptive textbooks. Changing the ideology of textbooks would definitely be an improvement, but so is new wallpaper which covers cracks without repairing the plaster. Eventually, we have to make more substantial changes. (236)

Both readers agreed that by balancing his support for Welch's arguments with a statement of his own, Davis is supporting successful communication. Both readers also agreed that Davis's terminology is non-intense, calm and conciliatory; even though Welch makes her points *accurately* and *changing the ideology of textbooks would definitely be an improvement*, Davis still believes that the problem *isn't completely* in

the textbooks, but caused by an inefficient teacher training system. Moreover, the readers both agreed that such language helps Davis communicate successfully.

Finally, Davis not only offers an alternative explanation of the problem under discussion, he seems to prove a sincere and scholarly interest in the subject by offering alternative solutions in his final paragraphs, as shown in the following passage:

Third, those of us who teach in departments with graduate programs must demand those programs incorporate required courses on the teaching of composition. To continue turning out literature PhDs with no training in composition theory is to continue ignoring the problem. (237)

Both readers agreed that Davis's interest is sincere and scholarly.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as balancing support for one's critic with one's own arguments; using calm, non-intense language; and showing sincere scholarly interest by offering alternate solutions. Techniques such as agreeing to disagree also met with some success. Hence, both readers rated this primary response successful overall.

"REPLY BY KATHLEEN E. WELCH," KATHLEEN E. WELCH (1988)

This article is a secondary response to Davis's "Response to Kathleen Welch: 'Ideology and Freshman Textbook Production.'" In it, Welch shows support for Davis's alternate arguments concerning ways to change the face of writing pedagogy, but also reemphasizes what she believes to be quicker, more powerful methods:

I agree with Professor Davis that writing teachers need to talk more to colleagues in other specialties about the importance of writing pedagogy. This common professional goal of persuading our colleagues through spoken discourse will always hold great power for change. Professor Davis writes that "By being good teachers of writing, each of us can help maybe fifty students a

semester. By changing the mind of only one colleague, we can double that number. By changing a whole department we can begin to make a difference.” In these ways we can persuade a few thousand people. This persuasion is significant, and he is right to remind us of this vital form of oral communication. (237)

Both readers agreed that Welch’s language in the preceding passage is supportive and non-intense: she *agree[s]* that Davis’s arguments *will always hold great power for change*. Also, both readers agreed that she shows no sign of being personally threatened by his alternate critique of the situation. Finally, both readers agreed that by stating that *he is right to remind us of this vital form of oral communication*, Welch shows respect for Davis’s role in what has become a scholarly interchange. At this point in her response, Welch calmly reasserts what she believes to be the *most* powerful tool for change: the written word:

But an even more powerful form of communication exists for us: the form of mechanical reproduction, to adapt Walter Benjamin’s phrase, that exists in books. Persuading colleagues through speaking—through orality—could change the minds of perhaps (using Professor Davis’s formulation) 100,000 people per year. But a mere two popular writing textbooks not only reach the same number of people, their form of persuasion—the written word—remains with them in unique ways. As Walter J. Ong has written (for example in *Orality and Literacy* and *The Presence of the Word*), the dynamism of the spoken word produces enormous energy, but that energy disappears rapidly, lodging partially or not at all in the memory. The power of the written word, on the other hand, resides partly in its comparative permanence. So while I agree with Professor Davis’s commitment to oral, face-to-face communication with colleagues, I disagree that orality has the power to reach or to persuade the necessary number of writing instructors and their students. (237)

Rather than tear down Davis or his opinions in order to support her own, Welch simply provides more support for her own views. One way she accomplishes this is by introducing not only numbers, but facts about memory and permanence, all backed up by a well-known and well-respected researcher, Walter J. Ong. In this way, she seems to be able to agree to disagree, without damaging the validity of Davis’s opinions or even

decreasing the importance of her own. Asked if they agreed this was the case, one reader said yes, the other stated partial agreement because, "I think she agrees with his position and hers."

General Diagnosis: As in Davis's previous response, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as using calm, supportive, non-intense language; showing respect for the primary respondent; and providing more solid proof for one's own arguments.

Both readers thought that Welch's arguing her own ideas, while showing respect for Davis's, results in the completion of a true scholarly exchange of information, not simply in a frustrating "chicken or egg" argument. Hence, both readers rated this secondary response successful overall.

"RESPONSE TO JAMES HOETKER AND GORDON BROSSELL, 'THE EFFECTS OF SYSTEMATIC VARIATIONS IN ESSAY TOPICS ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN,'" DAVIDA CHARNEY (1991)

This article is a primary response to James Hoetker and Gordon Brossell's "The Effects of Systematic Variations in Essay Topics on the Writing Performance of College Freshmen." In it, Charney expresses aggressive opposition to Hoetker and Brossell's conclusion that "the frame topic does the job it was intended to do" in writing programs (420). Given that all Hoetker and Brossell seem to be doing, essentially, is describing a completed study and listing the findings, Charney's response seems overly intense. Consider these opening paragraphs:

To those of us who have spent hours trying to convince colleagues in other disciplines (and even a few in our own) of the value of specifying realistic

rhetorical situations in writing assignments, Hoetker and Brossell's article seems jarringly counter-intuitive. They argue, on the basis of a study of writing topics (or "prompts"), that providing information about the rhetorical situation has no effect on the quality of essays produced by high- or low-ability writers. Accordingly, they recommend that anyone involved in large-scale writing assessments follow their example in using extremely brief prompts, such as "The most harmful current practice in the American educational system" (420). I find this recommendation not only counter-intuitive, but also hasty because it is based on an incorrect analysis of the data.

The recommendation seems dubious to begin with because other researchers have found that the rhetorical situation set in a prompt can influence writing quality. For example, Moshe Cohen and Margaret Riel recently found that students wrote significantly better essays (as measured by holistic scores as well as their own teachers' evaluations) when the prompt directed them to write to peers in other cultures as opposed to their teachers ("The Effect of Distant Audiences on Students' Writing," *American Educational Research Journal* 26 [Summer 1989]: 143-59). (90-91)

By using intense terms like *jarringly counter-intuitive* (*counter-intuitive* appears twice), *hasty*, *dubious*, and *incorrect* to describe Hoetker and Brossell's recommendations and analysis, Charney seems to call into the question both Hoetker and Brossell's research abilities and the validity of their research. Both readers agreed with this assessment and agreed that such terms could easily be interpreted as personal insult rather than professional commentary. Not only are such terms too intense, but this part of Charney's critiques seems to be a violation of the Maxim of Quality. That is, Charney seems to have no real proof to support such assertions, not having executed or offered a thorough study of Hoetker and Brossell's research notes; in other words, a single quote from a somewhat oppositional study does not seem to be enough proof that Hoetker and Brossell's analysis is incorrect. Indeed, both readers agreed with this interpretation, indicating that this violation of the Maxim of Quality has a negative impact on the success of the response. Moreover, Charney seems to violate the Maxim of Quality again, referring to an *incorrect analysis* three more times in the following passages:

I believe that if Hoetker and Brossell had analyzed their data correctly, they would have found important effects of prompts for both low- and high-ability writers. In fact, they used incorrect analyses both of holistic scores and of the frequency with which students used first or third person. In both analyses, Hoetker and Brossell treated the prompts as four independent variations, rather than looking for separate effects for the availability of rhetorical elaboration and for suggested stance (in technical terms, their ANOVA treated topic as one factor with four levels, not as two factors, each with two levels). As a result, it was impossible for them to detect what appear to be important interactions involving rhetorical elaboration, suggested stance, and writing ability. . . .

Hoetker and Brossell compound the problem of incorrect analysis when they investigate the prompts' influence on the use of first or third person; in particular, they omit the factor of writing ability (see their Table 4). As a result, it was impossible for their analysis to detect what appears to be a disproportionately strong influence of the Full prompts on low-ability writers. As indicated in the frequency table below, which I derived from their Table 2, low-level writers were much more "obedient" to cues in the prompts than high-ability writers. In particular, in response to the Full-Personal prompt, fully 81% of the low-ability writers used first person, while only 66% of the high-ability writers did so. A log-linear analysis of these frequencies would reveal whether this interaction of ability level, topic type, and person is statistically significant. (91-92)

Again, Charney claims that Hoetker and Brossell's analysis is incorrect based on a theory she herself has formed by reanalyzing only the information available in their article; since such an analysis is unavoidably incomplete, Charney seems to have once again violated the Maxim of Quality by making a statement whose truth is suspect.

Both readers agreed with this assessment. Now consider Charney's final paragraph:

The importance of re-analyzing the data should be clear. Hoetker and Brossell claim that the prompt of choice is the *least* informative version, Brief Impersonal. However, if the re-analyses turn out as I have suggested, then the most informative version, Full-Personal, may actually be the most effective for both high- and low-ability writers. . . . Given the goal of allowing all students to perform to their best ability in writing assessments, the doubts about Hoetker and Brossell's conclusions are important to dispel. (93)

Notice that Charney states *if the re-analyses turn out as I suggested*, admitting the possibility that they may not. This would seem to be another violation of the Maxim of Quality. Scholarly research procedures should have been followed before Charney

launched what seems to be an intense, unqualified attack on fellow researchers. Both readers agreed on these points.

General Diagnosis: In this case, both Maxim violations and general language intensity seem to have a significant adverse affect on the overall success of the response.

Both readers agreed that Charney's opposition to Hoetker and Brossell's conclusion seems overly aggressive and intense given that all Hoetker and Brossell seem to be doing, essentially, is describing a completed study and listing its findings. Still, readers were divided when asked to rate the overall success of this primary response; one reader said "successful," adding "I rated this response 'successful' because I think it might prompt future research on this point. It seems clear to me that the writer of the response has found her 'intuitive' view of the value of certain kinds of prompts threatened. She needs to prove her point by designing her own study." But the other reader rated the response unsuccessful, even though "she's probably right about their choosing the wrong research method and their inadequate literature review which laid them open to the very important question she asks at the beginning."

"REPLY BY JAMES HOETKER," JAMES HOETKER (1991)

This article is a secondary response to Davida Charney's "Response to James Hoetker and Gordon Brossell, 'The Effects of Systematic Variation in Essay Topics on the Writing Performance of College Freshmen.'" Although Charney's tone in her primary response seemed overly intense, Hoetker and Brossell's does not. Although they have every reason to be upset over what appears to be a strident personal and professional attack, they themselves seem to avoid making a personal attack on

Charney. In fact, they avoid referring to their critic by name, defusing the situation by instead referring to her in the third person as *our correspondent* throughout their response. Both readers agreed that this is a good way to defuse a potentially personal situation and retain successful communication. Because this response is so brief, it appears here in its entirety:

Our correspondent uses some good jargon but seems confused about the relationship between experimental design and analysis.

Ken Brewer of Florida State University worked with Gordon Brossell and me to develop the design for our study. We operationalized “topic” as a four-level variable because we thought that would enable us to gather the best quality of information within the practical constraints that applied.

We collected our data and analyzed them according to the design we had used to collect them. We were therefore surprised to be informed that our analysis was “incorrect.”

We eventually figured out that our correspondent says “incorrect analysis” when she means “different design.” She would apparently have preferred us to have used a design in which “rhetorical specification” and “stance” were operationalized as two separate two-level variables. We didn’t, though, and it is simply impossible to analyze our data as if we had.

A study using the design our correspondent prefers might have different results than ours. Or it might not. There’s no way to tell until data are actually collected and analyzed. Our correspondent should just go ahead and conduct the study she has proposed.

In any case, when it happens that a researcher believes something might be learned from re-analysis of another researcher’s data, the customary practice is to request access to that data, not to proceed to publication on the basis solely of speculation and dogmatic assertion. (93-94)

Very coolly and logically, Hoetker suggests that Charney *seem[s] confused about the relationship between experimental design and analysis*, noting that although she *apparently [would] have preferred* a different design for the study, her preference could not possibly change the analysis of the design he and Brossell did use. Hoetker’s language seems quite mild and non-intense, under the circumstances, as does his

admittance that perhaps Charney's arguments might be proved correct, and thus she *should just go ahead and conduct the study she has proposed*. But both readers disagreed with this interpretation, apparently sensing a more subtle intensity.

But when Hoetker criticizes Charney's accusatory approach, he seems to do so indirectly and discreetly so that he does not appear to attack her personally, referring instead to more ambiguous entities such as *a researcher*. Readers were divided on this interpretation; one disagreed because "anyone who bothers to read the response would probably know the author of the primary response," but the other reader did agree.

Neither does Hoetker attack Charney personally for being prematurely speculative and dogmatic (intense language) although he does say it is *customary practice . . . not to proceed* (non-intense language) in this fashion. However, when asked if Hoetker manages in this final statement to criticize the form of Charney's response without attacking her personally with intense language, one reader said yes, the other, no.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as avoiding criticizing another scholar by name (e.g. *our correspondent*). However, some positive stylistic elements such as the use of non-intense language and indirect criticism (referring to Charney as *a researcher*), had little or no positive affect.

Readers were divided, then, when asked to rate the overall success of this secondary response. One reader found it successful, adding "Hoetker's response makes it very clear his sense that Charney has been unprofessional in her response and is 'confused' about the 'jargon' she uses." The other reader found the response unsuccessful, even

though Hoetker is “right in charging that Charney flayed them [Hoetker and Brossell] publicly and thereby violated traditional research civility.”

“RESPONSE TO LESTER FAIGLEY, ‘JUDGING WRITING, JUDGING SELVES,’”
BRUCE HOLLAND (1991)

This article is a primary response to Lester Faigley’s “Judging Writing, Judging Selves.” In it, Holland questions Faigley’s analysis of a certain text, an analysis central to Faigley’s argument. Readers agreed that like Faigley’s original article, Holland’s response is calm and dispassionate, as seen in the following passage:

In “Judging Writing, Judging Selves,” Lester Faigley worries about evaluators who privilege particular notions of the self—an aesthetic or elite self (as did the 1931 commission on English in their review of the 1929 CEEB English test), or an authentic or true self (as do some of the teachers in William Coles and James Vopat’s *What Makes Writing Good* (Heath, 1985). I want to question Faigley’s analysis of the Coles and Vopat text. (87)

Holland’s tone throughout the remainder of the article seems critical, though tentatively so:

Faigley notes that in several teachers’ commentaries *honest*, *authentic*, and *integrity* are terms used to describe the excellence of a writing (404). Faigley implies that for these teachers good writing is honest writing and honest writing is personal writing. Reacting to Erika Lindemann’s commentary on “At the Beach,” Faigley objects, “Why is writing about potentially embarrassing and painful aspects of one’s life considered more honest than, say, the efforts of Joe Williams’s student, Greg Shaefer, who tries to figure out what Thucydides was up to in writing about the Peloponnesian War?” (404–05). But Faigley’s assumption begs the question: I don’t believe Lindemann has implied that a history paper is, per se, less honest. A similar confusion occurs when Faigley seems to assume James Britton and Steve Seaton connect trust with honesty and honesty with personal writing. But Britton and Seaton are merely implying, I think, that trust (and risk) are more at issue when the *reader* is a personal acquaintance (405). (88)

Note Holland’s use of the term *confusion* as opposed to more intense terms like *incorrect* or *wrong*. Both readers agreed that this critical-but-tentative approach is effective in promoting successful communication. Holland continues to avoid

inappropriate language intensity in subsequent passages as well, choosing instead to use terms like *possible misreadings*:

In addition to possible misreadings, Faigley engages in a kind of equivocation. He claims that the commentaries of Larry Levy, Stephen Tchudi, and Roger Garrison “imply that autobiographical writing is more ‘truthful’ than nonautobiographical writing” (405). Soon it becomes clear that “truthful” means “freshness of insight” (405). The slippage of terms and categories appears again when Faigley quotes Harvey Daniels, presumably speaking of autobiographical papers, which provide “a welcome burst of enjoyment amid the often dreary and endless process of evaluating student work” (405). However, Daniel’s comment refers not to a piece of autobiographical writing but to a “story-scenario” (Coles and Vopat 261). And while he praises the paper’s authentic voice, the paper is not autobiographical in form, nor does it narrate an actual experience from the author’s life. . . My point is that these commentaries do not equate or limit good writing to autobiographical writing as Faigley implies they do. (88)

In the preceding passage, Holland seems to couple non-intense language with enlightening quotes and information from the text in question in order to criticize Faigley’s points without attacking him personally. Both readers agreed with this assessment. And Holland does not set himself up as the only authority either, conceding that Faigley *may* be right, but allowing the reader to make that decision based on the extra proofs Holland provides (and therefore avoiding a violation of the Maxim of Quality):

While Faigley *may* be correct in rejecting an essential self, I think he misses another sense of a true or unified self implied by several teachers: a true self appears in the match between the explicitly identified self and the self implied by the language used. The commentaries of Levy (Coles and Vopat 126) and Lindemann (Coles and Vopat 162) both illustrate this sense of true self, but Peggy Bloxam’s paper written for James Vopat also illustrates it. . . . In suggesting that the selves privileged in *What Makes Writing Good* are generally autobiographical or essential selves, Faigley’s analysis seems questionable and incomplete. (88-89)

Both readers agreed that making such a concession is a sign that Holland’s reasons for responding are professional, not personal.

Only the terms *questionable* and *incomplete* seem to carry any significant intensity in this response. But readers were divided on this, one saying no, the other yes. Still, given that such terms refer to Faigley's analysis, not Faigley himself, and are supported by numerous textual proofs, they do not seem particularly harmful in this context. Both readers agreed with this assessment.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as using mild, non-intense language, using quotes from the original article as background for criticism, and avoiding violating the Maxim of Quality by avoiding making false or incomplete conclusions. Because of these elements, the few counts of inappropriate language intensity had no significant affect on the overall success of the response. One reader rated this primary response "between very successful and successful," while the other found it successful overall.

"REPLY BY LESTER FAIGLEY," LESTER FAIGLEY (1991)

This article is a secondary response to Holland's "Response to Lester Faigley: 'Judging Writing, Judging Selves.'" Faigley begins his article very graciously by thanking Holland for taking part in the discussion:

I appreciate Professor Holland's response to "Judging Writing, Judging Selves," because I believe the profession would benefit from a sustained discussion of Coles and Vopat's *What Makes Writing Good*. During the dominant era of writing as process, relatively few statements appeared in the professional literature concerning exactly what teachers value in student's written products. Coles and Vopat's extraordinary success in assembling such a diverse and distinguished group of teacher/scholars of writing makes this collection a key document for those who would characterize the teaching of college writing in the 1980s. (89)

Readers agreed that stating appreciation is an appropriate way to open a professional discussion, one which encourages open communication. But Faigley seems to move quickly from terms like *appreciate* to more intense terms, as in the next passage:

Professor Holland quibbles with my interpretation of the book, but I don't find support for his implication that the student examples in *What Makes Writing Good* are predominantly something other than writing about the self. In their review of *What Makes Writing Good* (CCC 37 [May 1986]: 244-47), Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg note that "[t]he overwhelming majority of pieces . . . are descriptions of the students' personal experiences." All taxonomies of types of writing finally collapse, but whether you count 20 autobiographical narratives as I did or 15 as Professor Holland did, I see no other type that comes close. (89)

Faigley's use of the verb *quibbles* implies negative author's stance, in effect, suggesting that perhaps Holland's criticism is not substantive, perhaps not even professionally intended, an implication which would seem to contradict Faigley's initial appreciation. Asked if they agreed with this interpretation and found such a suggestion inappropriate in a professional scholarly context, one reader said no, finding the suggestion appropriate. But the other reader said yes, finding the suggestion inappropriate "without qualification." Further examples of inappropriate language intensity seem to appear in subsequent passages:

Professor Holland accuses me of being confused and begging the question when I contend that teachers who value what they describe as "honesty," "authenticity," "sincerity," and "truth" in writing privilege writing about the self, in particular, he accuses me of misrepresenting Erika Lindemann's commentary in this regard. (90)

Notice that Faigley twice employs the verb *accuses*, a verb which implies negative author's stance and suggests that Faigley was under direct attack. Yet while Faigley claims that Holland *accuses me of being confused*, Holland's words are *A similar confusion occurs when Faigley seems to assume . . .* These words seem hardly a direct attack on Faigley, and indeed Holland seems to have worded his criticism so to avoid

the appearance of attack or accusation. Thus Faigley seems to be violating the Maxim of Quality. Asked, then, if they thought Faigley's statement is appropriate in a professional scholarly context, one reader said yes, the other, no.

Faigley does seem to return to a more dispassionate professional tone in the end:

Finally, I do not want to impugn the motives of those who talk about "true selves" and "authentic voices" (Erika Lindemann is one of the most dedicated people we have in this profession, and I know of no one who has done more to help secondary and college writing teachers nationwide) nor am I discouraging the use of autobiographical writing . . . What I am arguing at the end of the essay is that if our goal is to "empower" (I would prefer the verb *enable*) students through autobiographical writing, then rather than directing students to discover their true selves, we might ask them to examine the social meanings assigned to selves in particular discourses and how students might challenge and change those meanings. (90)

Asked if they agreed that this passage represents a return to a more dispassionate professional tone, the first reader disagreed, stating, "I think he's been professional throughout," while the other reader agreed. But by stating that he doesn't wish to *impugn* other researchers or *discourag[e]* certain types of writing and by choosing the plural pronoun *we*, Faigley seems to realize that he has perhaps over-stepped his bounds and is attempting to return to the sort of successful communication that is the goal in such interchanges. Only one reader agreed with this interpretation; the other chose not to respond to the question.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations seemed to have a limited affect on the success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs. Positive stylistic elements such as thanking a critic for feedback had some positive effect, while providing assurance of no hard feelings and using plural pronouns to stress a sense of community had a lesser positive affect.

Readers were divided on an overall rating for this secondary response. The first reader found it “between very successful and successful,” while the second found it unsuccessful overall.

“RESPONSE TO JANICE M. WOLFF, ‘WRITING PASSIONATELY: STUDENT RESISTANCE TO FEMINIST READINGS,’” B.J. BOWMAN (1992)

This article is a primary response to Janice M. Wolff’s “Writing Passionately: Student Resistance to Feminist Readings.” In it, Bowman argues that Wolff’s method of “resisting” student writing is more likely to inhibit students’ development than encourage it. Instead, Bowman favors more passive methods: in effect, letting students learn by examining their own resistance.

Wolff’s original article is scholarly, though conversational, and Bowman’s response seems much the same, as we see in the following passage:

In “Writing Passionately,” Janice M. Wolff says, “I needed to resist my students’ readings, and yet I needed to respect them.” However, I argue that Wolff’s form of resistance cannot co-exist with respect for students. Wolff says, “Impassioned writing, and its attending resistance, is the site for a strong voice . . . [but] the strong voice needs tempering.” By tempering, Wolff refers to her resistance to their resistance; when a male student uses the word “authoress” she writes in his margin, “Isn’t this [sexism]?”

My answer to this question would be, “No, it isn’t, not to him.” While Wolff was surprised at the amount of “sedimented baggage [her] students brought to their readings,” in *In the Middle* (Boynton/Cook, 1987, 27), Nancie Atwell points out that we need to remember that “although our students’ worlds and ours intersect, they are different.” In *Lives on the Boundary* (Penguin, 1989) Mike Rose writes, “When I was growing up I absorbed an entire belief system. . . . I had rigid notions about social roles . . . gender . . . politics” (193). Since we cannot teach critical thinking skills in a vacuum of abstract concepts—analyze, argue, critique—I find controversial issues to be a feasible springboard for engendering critical thinking competencies in first-year research composition courses. However, it cannot be appropriate to spring up in students’ lives—after eighteen years of instilled values—and tell them something they believe is fallacious and/or preposterous. Instead, we should offer the opposing voice through readings, classroom discussions, and journal writings—all of which present opportunities for students to truly reflect upon

and analyze their readings and to question ingrained value systems because they are able to see there may be more than one side to an issue. (525)

Notice that although Bowman takes a very opposite point of view, she does not seem to do so stridently through intense language. Wolff herself is not *wrong* or her views *false*, even though Bowman believes her form of resistance *cannot co-exist with respect for students*. And although Bowman too believes *controversial issues to be a feasible springboard for engendering critical thinking*, she does not find Wolff's methods of engendering such thinking *appropriate* in a student context. Both readers agreed that using this sort of mild, non-intense language is a good way to promote successful communication as opposed to defensive, more intense language.

In fact, Bowman seems to avoid making Wolff herself the focus of her counter-argument, as we see in the next passage:

The next item for consideration is the power of the teacher. A teacher of any class has immense power over students. Wolff believes that students who are writing passionately in defense of their beliefs will develop real voices. I would agree with this up until the point when the teacher takes advantage of his or her established power by intimidating students via "cajoles" or "teases" and, thereby, actually inhibits true voices, which occurs because students who are busy fighting the teacher's values are more concerned with defensive manipulating than with achieving real voice. In *Writing with Power* (Oxford UP, 1981), Peter Elbow categorizes the teacher as a "dangerous audience" (186). To acquire real voice, Elbow suggests that students try writing without an audience because he believes that fear of vulnerability is the main reason people avoid engaging real voice (307). (525)

Notice how Bowman *agree[s]* with Wolff up to a certain point, then when they divide, avoids making Wolff into a foe, referring instead to *the teacher who takes advantage of his or her established power*. Then she cites well-known researcher Peter Elbow as support for her argument, increasing its validity without further criticism of Wolff. Asked if they thought that avoiding making Wolff herself the focus of her counter-argument is a good way for Bowman to keep the lines of successful

communication open, both readers said yes. Both readers also agreed that Bowman keeps the lines of successful communication open by putting the most focus on what she feels *she* should be as a composition teacher, not what *Wolff* should be, although the latter is certainly implied to some extent:

When teaching controversial subjects, it is important to respect students' backgrounds, to treat them as adults, and to remember our objectives in teaching composition courses. As their teacher, my job is to use my understanding of our readings to help them understand those texts better so they can write their own texts and come to their own conclusions. My task as their teacher is not to get them to think like me; my task is to get them to think. (526)

Here, both readers agreed that by focussing on herself and her own goals and expectations as a composition teacher, Bowman shows that she is sincerely interested in learning from the on-going discussion, and not in a personal critique of Wolff.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as using mild, non-intense language, avoiding making the author of the original article the focus of the criticism; and focussing on one's own goals as regards the subject at hand. Both readers rated this primary response successful overall.

"REPLY BY JANICE M. WOLFF," JANICE M. WOLFF (1992)

This article is a secondary response to B.J. Bowman's "Response to Janice M. Wolff, 'Writing Passionately: Student Resistance to Feminist Readings.'" Although Wolff takes this opportunity to reassert her original views, the tone of this article seems very much like the first two: calm, conversational, and aimed at promoting an exchange of information, as seen in the following passages:

I'm grateful for B.J. Bowman's response to my essay, "Writing Passionately: Student Resistance to Feminist Readings." She reads and resists my writing in a most respectful way, carefully and with real interest. I would like to think that I read student texts in a similar way. Had my students considered me a "dangerous audience," they would not have written as energetically as they did.

I think that the major bone of contention between Ms. Bowman and me is the issue of power and authority in the classroom. Working in the margins, as I was, and resisting students' resistances, had already decentered and deferred my power. I wasn't ready to relinquish my voice, however. Charles Paine, in "Relativism, Radical Pedagogy, and the Ideology of Paralysis," (*College English* 51 [Oct. 1989]: 557-70) rereads Freire, Giroux, Shor, and articulates the sort of project I have undertaken to write about:

How does a teacher develop and maintain an emancipatory vision when, unlike Freire in 1960s Brazil, he or she is not surrounded by students who feel a desperate need for liberation, but by students who in fact feel quite comfortable with their world or by affluent college students who have great interest in keeping things exactly as they are? (526)

Notice how Wolff uses non-intense language which seems to bind her and her critic as colleagues instead of banishing Bowman to an opposite side: Wolff is *grateful* for Bowman's comments, complimenting her for *read[ing] and resist[ing] my writing in a most respectful way, carefully and with real interest*. Both readers agreed that using such conciliatory language often promotes successful communication by defusing personal tensions. Wolff then indirectly applies the same compliment to herself, erasing any question that she might have been overly aggressive by pointing out that had she been so, her students would not have written so *energetically* with such personal voice, in the first place. Both readers agreed that pointing this out is a good way for Wolff to support her position without sounding overly defensive.

And like Bowman, Wolff supports her views by citing another researcher, Charles Paine, instead of attacking Bowman or her opinions personally. Both readers agreed that citing such sources is a better way for Wolff to reassert her arguments than attacking Bowman or her opinions personally.

Finally, Wolff seems to point to her agreement with Bowman as much as possible, and seems politely firm even when she does not:

Bowman, as I do, wants students to “question ingrained value systems,” so we’re not all that far apart in our positions. . . . I think that Bowman and I are both interested in enabling students to “reperceive” the world (as is suggested by her comment about African-American students and their perceptions of racism). Bowman ends with the sentence: “My task is not to get them to think like me; my task is to get them to think.” I would agree, but it’s also our job to resist students when their thinking reproduces sexism, racism, and homophobia—those ideologies of the dominant culture. (526)

Both readers agreed that although Wolff is expressing disagreement with Bowman in her final sentence, her lack of language intensity and even her use of the pronoun *our* establishes a sense of communication and community which could not have existed had her aim been personal criticism.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as using mild, non-intense language; showing agreement with critic’s arguments; and citing outside sources as further proof. Both readers rated this secondary response very successful overall, one adding that “while these writers disagree, they do so without attacking one another.”

“RESPONSE TO THOMAS RECCHIO, ‘A BAKHTINIAN READING OF STUDENT WRITING,’” SANFORD TWEEDIE (1992)

This article is a primary response to Thomas Recchio’s “A Bakhtinian Reading of Student Writing.” In it, Tweedie questions the validity of Recchio’s reading of the student essay used as an example in Recchio’s original article. Tweedie seems to begin this questioning very appropriately by first acknowledging the merit of Recchio’s article:

Thomas E. Recchio provides a valuable and needed expansion of Bakhtinian ideas to the composition classroom. Recchio argues that our responsibility as teachers, is, in part, to make students aware of the “conflicting, though potentially enriching, claims made on them by the new modes of discourse they bring with them into the classroom and by the new modes of discourse they encounter there” (447). As teachers, “we can help our students . . . negotiate those claims as they work towards developing a consciously critical point of view on what they read through what they write” (447). (526)

Asked if they thought that describing Recchio’s article as *a valuable and needed expansion*, while stressing the importance of the topic of teacher responsibility, is a good way to open the lines of scholarly communication, both readers said yes. Moreover, although we know that a disagreement will probably follow, we expect it, following the tone of the opening passage, to be calm, objective, and supportive of the scholarly exchange. One reader agreed with this assessment outright, the other replying, “probably.”

Yet Tweedie seems to lash out with inappropriate language intensity in the very next line:

This is laudable and well within a Bakhtinian perspective, but Recchio’s willful misreading of the student’s essay ultimately subverts a Bakhtinian approach. I am referring specifically to his decision to ignore what he labels the essay’s fourth mode of discourse—the “implicit *confessional, narrative discourse*” (450, Recchio’s emphasis). Granted, this mode is “the most subtle and disturbing,” presenting a reader with “special problems,” but by ignoring these complications, Recchio represses the ‘interanimating’ (a Bakhtinian word Recchio invokes) going on among the discourses. (527)

By using the words *willful misreading* to describe what is in fact the author’s choice of one of several possible meanings, Tweedie seems to accomplish two things: (1) he seems to violate the Maxim of Quality, because this statement is not necessarily true, and (2) his overly intense language seems to imply that Recchio has intentionally distorted data for less than scholarly purposes, an implication that does not reflect well on Recchio’s scholarly research status. Only one of the readers agreed, however, that

these things are accomplished; the other disagreed, being unsure that the statement is indeed false and that statements made in one response article may significantly affect a scholar's status.

In addition, Tweedie seems to use verbs which imply counter-factive writer's stance such as *ignore* (used twice) and *represses*, to imply that Recchio is deliberately providing false information. Asked if they agreed with this assessment one reader replied, "yes, because of the earlier use of *willful*." But other reader said no, that these are "interpretations," not implications.

Consider another passage from Tweedie's response:

Bakhtin argues in "Discourse in the Novel," that it "is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of [these] two embattled tendencies in the life of language" (*The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, U of Texas P, 1981, 272). Recchio refuses to do this. He attempts to have the writer more skillfully dialogize her writing via his analysis of the first three modes, but ignores the text's further tension by not acknowledging the disunifying influence of the narrative mode. As the student negotiates between the "official" voice of the academy, a voice which she does not (yet) know how to inhabit, and her personal perspective of incest, Recchio's disregard of the decentralizing impulse curtails the essay's heteroglossia—the matrix of the centripetal and centrifugal forces—thus favoring a monologic, academic perspective. (527)

Again, counter-factive verbs such as *refuses* and *ignores* seem to imply that Recchio is falsely and intentionally manipulating data. But asked if they thought this was the case, one reader replied, "no," the other, "not necessarily." Asked if they thought that an accusation of active *disregard*, a term which also hints at sloppy or incomplete research, supports the same implication, the first reader again replied "no," the second, "not necessarily, because of ideological perspectives."

But Tweedie seems to realize that he has perhaps been overly aggressive in his response, as we see in his final passage:

I do not mean to seem insensitive to either Recchio's or the student writer's circumstances. I realize this situation is potentially explosive, just as Bakhtin's beloved carnival can be. But such contradictory, centrifugal voices are always in potential [sic]. Invoking Bakhtin means foregrounding, not suppressing them. The undesired cannot be ignored away. (527)

Asked if they agreed that Tweedie expresses such a realization, one reader replied, "maybe," the other, "perhaps; but this is a convention, is it not?" But note that in spite of his indirect apology, Tweedie seems to use the verb *ignore[d]* yet again to characterize the quality of Recchio's research. Asked if they thought this seems a tad insensitive, if not downright insulting, the first reader replied "yes," the other, "perhaps," referring again to convention.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations had a limited affect on the success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs and intense language. However, positive stylistic elements such as acknowledging the worth of another scholar's claims did have some positive results.

Still, both readers rated this primary response unsuccessful overall, though readers did note some difficulty in achieving objective evaluation. One reader stated that "one's ideological baggage as well as knowledge of ongoing conversations about this topic influence the reader of this response."

"REPLY BY THOMAS E. RECCHIO," THOMAS E. RECCHIO (1992)

This article is a secondary response to Sanford Tweedie's "Response to Thomas Recchio, 'A Bakhtinian Reading of Student Writing.'" In it, Recchio attempts to explain to Tweedie and another primary respondent why he chose to take a particular "slant" in interpreting his student example. He begins his response by validating the intentions of his critics:

Sanford Tweedie and Lynn Kramer justly question my reluctance to address what Kramer so aptly identifies as ‘the most potentially viable discourse’ in the paper I discussed: “the student’s.” Tweedie sees this reluctance as a “disregard of the decentralizing impulse [within] the essay’s heteroglossia”; he construes this disregard as my way of “favoring a monologic, academic perspective.” . . . Both responses suggest that the student’s voice can only be located in the “implicit confessional, narrative discourse” and that, in my effort to address the conceptual dissonance that emerges from the clash of the other, preconfigured discourses, I close off the possibility for the student to realize her voice; in effect, that my analysis silences that voice. (529)

By recognizing their concerns as *just*, characterizing Kramer’s remarks as *apt*, and failing to characterize Tweedie’s criticism as an attack, both readers agreed that Recchio successfully reestablishes an open scholarly dialogue among peers. He then seems to calmly move into an explanation of why he chose the reading Tweedie so adamantly objects to:

The crux of the matter seems to be the extent to which the experiential narrative emerges in the paper and what an analysis of that narrative might reveal about the depth of the carnivalesque heteroglossia in the student’s language (for Tweedie) and the strength and credibility of the female voice (for Kramer). I would have welcomed some discussion of the narrative discourse in the student paper, but neither Tweedie nor Kramer offer such a discussion. Perhaps the problem with the “implicit” narrative discourse in the student paper is precisely its implicitness; in fact, the student’s earnest efforts to understand, analyze, and explain the perpetrator’s behavior may argue against any “confessional, narrative discourse.” But I don’t think so. There are hints of a narrative discourse, and before the student can begin to extend that discourse, she has to recognize how the other discourses which seem to be only partially hers, resist her intermittent effort to speak her experience, be it “lived” or intellectual. By separating out the three more fully articulate discourses in the paper and uncovering some of the assumptions behind those discourses, my effort was to move the student away from mimicry, especially of Freud’s words. (529)

Notice that Recchio’s primary point in this passage seems to be that a confessional, narrative discourse would be hard to point out to a student given that it is something the student internalizes. Therefore, it is only logical to focus on more external discourses. Asked if this appeal to logic is an appropriate way to disagree with Tweedie without criticizing him personally, both readers said yes.

Very subtle, too, is Recchio's statement *I would have welcomed some discussion of the narrative discourse in the student paper, but neither Tweedie nor Kramer offer such a discussion*. Although it is dispassionate and calm, it implies two things: (1) Tweedie's failure to provide such discussion is itself support for Recchio's argument—interpreting a student's personal discourse is simply too difficult to be a primary goal in itself—and (2) Tweedie should not make such accusations without having proof or at least a fully-developed counter-argument—to do so is to show the same lack of research quality that he seems to indirectly accuse Recchio of promoting. Both readers agreed that by making such subtle criticisms, Recchio successfully supports his own research without mounting a personal attack.

The final paragraph of Recchio's very calm response seems to contrast strongly with Tweedie's emotional one:

The burden of my essay, then, was to try to come to terms with the pre-configured discourse which so overwhelms the student's voice, to peel away those versions of "authoritative discourse" as a preliminary to the student's struggle to "liberate [her discourse]. . . from the authority of the other's discourse" (Bakhtin 348). . . . By working to uncover the various languages within which parts of her own language are entangled, I wanted to suggest a way in which she might begin. (529-530)

Notice the verbs Recchio uses to describe the intentions behind his original article: *peel* (*away*), *uncover*, *suggest*. Combined with his even tone, both readers agreed that these verbs help to characterize the writer as a scholar sincere in his pursuits, not the willful, somewhat sloppy, researcher who sometimes seems to be the subject of Tweedie's criticism.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such

as validating critics' intentions; appealing to logic; subtly criticizing lack of proof on part of critics; and using mild, non-intense verbs.

Both readers rated this secondary response very successful overall, one of them adding, "I find this an effective response because Recchio defends his position well, I think, without attacking writers of other responses."

"RESPONSE TO MAXINE HAIRSTON, 'DIVERSITY, IDEOLOGY, AND TEACHING WRITING,'" TONI MESTER (1993)

This article is a primary response to Maxine Hairston's "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing." In it, Mester uses what both readers agreed is a cutting parody of a song from a famous musical to criticize Hairston and her opposition to the current model of composition pedagogy which Hairston (1993) believes "puts dogma before diversity, politics before craft, ideology before critical thinking, and the social goals of the teacher before the educational needs of the student" (180).

Before beginning an analysis of this primary response, it is worth mentioning that Hairston's original article, although obviously based on careful thinking and thorough research, is more passionate than most original articles tend to be. Hairston quotes many well-known scholars, whose arguments she uses to support her own counter-argument, and is occasionally too intensely candid in her evaluations. For example, she calls a comment by James Berlin (1988) *a facile non-logical leap!* (183) And the claims of scholars like Ronald Strickland (1990) *strike [her] as silly, simplistic, and quite undemonstrable* (184). Richard C. Gebhardt, Editor of CCC, noted that Hairston's article "provoked more Counterstatement submissions than any CCC article since the start of 1987" (Gebhardt 295).

Still, the focus of the current study is the writing of respondents, and the successful or unsuccessful nature of such. And Mester's response, seemingly intended as a personal jab at Hairston, seems neither appropriate or successful. Because it is short, it appears here in its entirety:

Since Maxine Hairston has got a list, I've revised Koko's song for her. Koko, as you remember, was The Lord High Executioner in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado*. The Chorus announces his arrival on the stage with a triumphal march, "Behold the Lord High Executioner! A personage of noble rank and title, a dignified and potent officer whose functions are particularly vital." Koko assures them that he is ready to carry out his duties in the song, "They'll None of 'Em Be Missed." Here's a version Professor Hairston and a chorus of employed composition teachers might enjoy.

As someday it may happen that a victim must be found,
I've got a little list, I've got a little list
Of professional offenders who might well be underground
And who never would be missed, they never would be missed.
There's Marxist intellectuals who pen monographs,

All feminists with leftist views that irritate the haves.
All anti-racist graduates with ideology,
All writers who when writing show a sense of history,
And all the English teachers who on literature insist,
They'd none of them be missed, they'd none of them be missed!

Chorus:

She's got us on a list, she's got us on the list
And none of us be missed, no, none of us be missed!

The literary critic, and the others of his taste
And the deconstructionist, I've got her on the list!
And the people who preach politics to puff in students' face,
They never would be missed, they never would be missed.
Then the idiot who praises in enthusiastic tone
All rhetoric but mine or discipline but our own,
And the grunts of the academy who papers must correct,
And the basic skills providers who have nothing to protect,
And that singular anomaly, the part-time activist
I don't think they'll be missed, I'm sure they'll not be missed!

Chorus:

She's got us on the list, she's got us on the list
And she don't think we'll be missed, she's sure we won't be missed! (254-255)

First, using a parody (particularly a parody of an over-used parody like “They’ll None of ‘Em Be Missed”) to constitute a response seems to be a violation of the Maxim of Manner: such a nonstandard method seems to be less an example of clear purposeful communication, and more a personal jab at Hairston. Thus readers were asked whether they found this parody: (1) an effective part of the dialogue; (2) “venting” which is intended as a personal jab at Hairston; or (3) both of these. One reader said “both,” the other “venting.” Their responses, then, suggest that this violation of the Maxim of Manner does impact the success of Mester’s response.

Second, Mester’s long explanation (including names and dialogue) regarding a key character from Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* seems to be a violation of the Maxims of Quantity and Relation; Mester seems to be telling us too much about something which is not particularly relevant to the discussion of composition pedagogy. The resulting implication is this: Hairston, like Koko, is a sort of tyrant whose power has made her unwilling to suffer, and willing to actively stifle, opposing opinions. But when asked if they agreed with this assessment, readers were divided; one reader said yes, the other no. Thus these Maxim violations may not, in this instance, greatly impact the overall success of the response.

Note how the description of Koko—*A personage of noble rank and title, a dignified and potent officer whose functions are particularly vital*—provides a possible parallel to a general description of Hairston printed with her original article—*professor emeritus of English at the University of Texas . . . Past Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication* (179). This parallel could be construed as a violation of the Rules of Politeness if this description of Koko is being used sarcastically to

support an opposite conclusion. However, neither reader thought that Mester draws this parallel in order to scoff at Hairston and her position, and thus did not believe that Mester violates the Rules of Politeness.

Also, the language used in Mester's parody itself seems overly intense given that Mester presents it, sarcastically of course, as coming from the mouth of Hairston. However, only one of the two readers agreed with this assessment.

But as passionate as Hairston is in her original article, she gives no sign that she wants to banish any of her colleagues from the scholarly arena nor does she malign them as *idiot[s] who praise in enthusiastic tone / All rhetoric but mine or discipline but our own*. Asked again, then, if this intensity constitutes a personal attack on Hairston, one reader said yes; the other chose not to comment (see "General Diagnosis" below).

Moreover, attributing such intensity to Hairston seems to backfire and make Mester seem to be the overly aggressive one. One reader agreed with this assessment, the other again refrained from comment. And asked if this parody/response does anything to support an alternate argument or contribute to the discussion of the preferred future of composition pedagogy, one reader said "yes," the other, "no."

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations and intense language had a limited affect on the success of the response, while violations of the Rules of Politeness had no affect. Still, readers were divided on an overall rating, revealing that in this case, success is linked to some degree to agreement with Mester's views (or disagreement with Hairston's).

Asked how they would rate this primary response overall, one reader replied, "successful," the other, "unsuccessful." The reader who rated the response successful had trouble evaluating this response due to personal involvement. She writes:

I can't read this outside a broader context. This became a major national scandal, one initiated by Hairston. She also made a scene at CCCC by coming to a panel meant to discuss this and disrupting it. In addition, Mester's reply follows others. I simply cannot read any of this without that context, and it makes me read very differently than I might had I not been aware of all this.

But other reader had no such trouble, stating that "this kind of response is clever and creative" but "rarely does more than make a single point. It adds little to the debate."

"REPLY BY MAXINE HAIRSTON," MAXINE HAIRSTON (1993)

This article is a secondary response to Mester's "Response to Maxine Hairston, 'Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing.'" More accurately, it is a general response to both the supporting and opposing arguments of all of her primary respondents, Mester included. Instead of hurling invective back at respondents like Mester, Hairston seems to approach their criticism very diplomatically, as we see in the following passage:

It strikes me as a healthy sign for our profession to be having such a spirited discussion about what and how we should teach in writing courses, particularly in required first-year English courses. What an encouraging change from those days when English 101 was dismissed as a service course, not important enough to argue about. The issue of what goes on in freshman English has always been primary for me; in fact, my first professional article, published more than 20 years ago, was titled "What's a Freshman Theme For?" It seems appropriate that "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing," which will almost certainly be my last major professional article, focuses on the same topic. Today, however, the context for the discussion is more complex, given a changing student population and a changing world. The tone is also far more emotional. That's unfortunate—some good professional friendships have dissolved in the heat of the argument. (255)

Notice how Hairston seems to attempt to defuse what is in danger of becoming a divided camp by referring to the discussion simply as *spirited* and calling it *a healthy sign*. But she also recognizes the *emotional tone* of the discussion and seems sincerely disturbed by it, and indirectly her part in it, by stating, *That's unfortunate—some good*

professional friendships have dissolved in the heat of the argument. Asked if Hairston is successful in expressing her sincerity, and hence in helping to reopen the lines of more objective communication, one reader replied, “no; impossible at this point after all that has happened,” but the other reader replied, “yes.”

Hairston seems to further express her sincerity, and hence helps to reopen the lines of more objective communication, by explaining her rationale in writing her original article:

Nevertheless, I had to enter this conversation about the political classroom. Once I looked at *Racism and Sexism*, the Rothenberg text proposed for required freshmen English at the University of Texas, I could not walk away and say “I don’t want to get involved in this conflict,” even though I knew my speaking out would stir up controversy. I had no idea how much! I think I’ve said some things that needed to be said, and I hope I’ve convinced some people with my arguments. Now, however, I’m out of the classroom, and ready to exit the conversation. At this point in my life I find it more rewarding to focus my energy in my own community, particularly on projects that directly help disadvantaged women and children. There’s much important work to be done, and I want to contribute what I can. (255)

Talking about *enter[ing] this conversation* even though *she knew speaking out would stir up controversy* seems to imply that Hairston’s intentions were good, and that she never wanted her passionate article to cause any permanent damage to anyone in the field. Asked if they thought these statements are indicative of good intentions or just an attempt to save face, one reader replied, “both; perhaps her intentions were sincere, but she is generally seen as [having] initiated a vicious attack.” The other reader did not feel the statements are indicative of good intentions, but was not sure either that they were simply an attempt to save face.

Noting her exit from the field also seems to support Hairston’s good intentions; it’s difficult to impose your will on others, as Koko the Executioner does, when you no longer hold a position of power. However, neither reader agreed with this assessment.

Asked, then, if they thought that Hairston's noting her exit is just an attempt to save face and "back out" of the argument, one reader said "yes," the other "no; I think it's her explanation to an audience who may not know she's retiring."

Hairston does formally apologize for the one instance where she accidentally misquoted one of her sources:

I will not however, leave without offering C.H. Knoblauch [one of the many respondents] my apology. He was justified in complaining to the editor that I was not quoting him correctly when I said that he was setting up a straw man by attacking a mechanistic, structuralist model of composition I feel has already been discredited in the literature and calling it "conservative, repressive, deterministic, and elitist." . . . I regret my misattribution; it was careless. (255)

By referring to this mistake as a *misattribution* which was *careless*, Hairston seems to prove that she is more interested in the communicative purpose of the response, finding the truth, than in saving face personally. But readers were divided on this assessment. One disagreed, stating, "no; she then qualifies, saying he really, in spirit, said this." The other reader agreed, stating, "yes; I don't see face saving."

And although she seems to firmly believe that although she misquoted Knoblauch, she captured his sentiments correctly, Hairston seems willing to accept the claim of the injured author:

So although my quotation was literally inaccurate, I do not think it misrepresented Knoblauch's views. I'm also sorry that Cy feels that I distorted a longer quotation from his work by leaving out what he saw as important qualifying phrases. I didn't feel that I altered the essential content; certainly I didn't do so deliberately. Nevertheless, if the author is dissatisfied with the deletions I made, I bow to his judgment and apologize. (256)

Again, Hairston's repeated apologies and her calm defense of her intentions seem to imply that although she made a mistake on the one hand and received much general criticism on the other, she is still more concerned with a greater purpose and with keeping lines of communication open with Knoblauch (who she refers to with the

familiar form Cy) and other scholars than with her own defense. Asked if they agreed with this assessment, one reader was “unsure,” while the other thought that “she’s doing both.”

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which would normally seem key. And yet numerous positive stylistic elements, such as using mild non-intense language; showing sincere regret; explaining rationale to prove good intention; noting lack of future investment; apologizing for error; and accepting responsibility for actions had only a limited positive affect on the overall success of the response. This would seem to indicate that, in some cases, particularly those where ego-involvement is great, agreement or disagreement regarding topic would affect the overall success of the response, in spite of any negative or positive stylistic elements.

One reader found this secondary response unsuccessful overall, while the other disagreed, finding it successful. The reader who found the response unsuccessful had this to say:

Hairston draws sympathy with her repeated mentions of leaving the profession. She was a respected member, and to see this be the end of a long, good career is sad. Yet, there is a ring of insincerity here. I think the larger context makes it impossible to read these two responses for linguistic or rhetorical construction in themselves.

The other reader simply found that Hairston is “doing a lot of different things in this response, some more successful than others.”

CHAPTER SIX SUMMARY

Given factors concerning general information, publication statistics, and overall response tone, I expected members of the *College Composition and Communication* discourse community to be sensitive to violations of Grice's Maxims, the use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of generally intense language. But overall, Maxim violations had the most significant affect on the overall success of the response, while intense negative verbs and general language intensity had a more limited affect. And the few violations of the Rules of Politeness seemed to have no adverse affect on the overall success of the response. Also, ego-involvement, or the reader's agreement/disagreement with the respondent's views proved to be a stronger mitigating factor than I would have expected in a discourse community which seems to stress a sense of shared community.

More specifically, consider the responses which exhibited Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity: these negative stylistic elements seemed to have an overall limited affect on the success of the response, which is to say that in most of these cases, readers delivered a split verdict, one reader saying successful, the other, unsuccessful (e.g. Faigley). Perhaps this is because in many of these cases a number of positive stylistic elements such as showing sincere scholarly interest by offering alternate solutions; showing respect for one's critic; thanking one's critic for feedback; and citing outside sources provided an effective counter-balance. And as aforesaid, ego-involvement seemed to counter-act negative stylistic elements in some cases (e.g. Charney).

Still, cases which did not exhibit Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity were almost always rated successful overall (e.g. Wolff). In the responses where this was not the case (i.e. a split verdict as in Hairston), ego-involvement again seemed to be the primary mitigating factor.

ENDNOTES

1. The primary response in question is entitled "I Came to Believe: Ethnography, Anonymity, and the Private I"; a secondary response, "Response" by Beth Daniell, is also part of the set.
2. The other articles in this set are: "Response [to Peter Elbow]" (Bartholomae 1995); "Response [to David Bartholomae]" (Elbow 1995); "Romantic Resonances" (Bialostosky 1995); "If Winston Weathers Would Just Write to Me on E-Mail" (Bishop 1995); and "Writing: In and With the World" (Welsh 1995).

CHAPTER SEVEN: *PUBLICATIONS OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA) is published six times yearly, but only four of these volumes include articles and thus response papers; the remaining two volumes are devoted to the business and workings of the Modern Language Association, such as panel listings for the annual conference. All four of the readers in this section agreed that *PMLA* is a highly-respected—or at the very least important—journal in their field, and that writers published here have some stake in making a good impression on their readers. In fact, publication in this journal is considered an honor by the majority of scholars in “English” studies. Many of these scholars, especially those in literary studies, consider it a once-in-a-lifetime achievement to be published in *PMLA*, even if they don’t agree with or appreciate what many seem to consider its increasingly political slant.

As “the publication of a large and heterogeneous association,” *PMLA* publishes a variety of articles “of interest to those concerned with the study of language and literature” (i). According to its mission statement,

the journal is receptive to a variety of topics whether general or specific, and to all scholarly methods and theoretical perspectives. The ideal *PMLA* essay exemplifies the best of its kind, whatever the kind; addresses a significant problem; draws out clearly the implications of its findings; and engages the attention of its audience through a concise, readable presentation. (i)

PUBLICATION STATISTICS

Unfortunately, the editor of *PMLA* declined to complete the questionnaire concerning scholarly response paper publication in her journal, so the information in this and subsequent sections is based purely on external observation¹.

Approximately 94 response sets were published in *PMLA* between 1986 and 1996. Thus one could argue that *PMLA* readers submit responses more frequently than readers in any of the other journals, nearly three times as many as *CCC* in the same ten year period. Of course, the membership of MLA is undoubtedly larger than the reader base of the other journals, and this fact has to be taken into account. Still, the responses in the various journals are not all in the same style, and *PMLA*'s are shorter and seem much more spontaneous, a fact which also has to be considered. Ten of these 94 sets included only primary responses, but the remaining 84 included both primary and secondary responses, which would seem to indicate a strong involvement on the part of the authors of original articles in the critical process.

PMLA does not solicit responses directly but does publish them regularly and frequently. Style is more informal, and titles have no original flair; primary responses appear under a general heading, and secondary responses are always entitled "Reply." Responses published in *PMLA* are short, one and a half pages long on average. An average of nine months separated the publication of the original article and the primary response, while primary and secondary responses always appeared in the same issue, indicating that the author of the original article had some knowledge of the forthcoming criticism and time to prepare.

Like *CCC*, *PMLA* did publish a few response sets that did not fit the definition for this study—more, in fact, than *CCC*. For example, in one set, the secondary response was not written by the original author, Jacques Derrida, but by the translators who had translated his article into English for publication in *PMLA*². The other exceptions are primarily protests against either the tone of an exchange between an original author and

a primary respondent or the tone and intensity of a primary respondent. Between 1986 and 1996, several of these exceptions were linked with Richard Levin's "Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy" (1988). For example, "Feminist Thematics" drew so many primary responses—most of them intensely negative and one of them signed by no fewer than twenty-four authors—that concerned readers such as Ward Parks (1992) felt compelled to respond³. Parks writes:

Over the near decade of my subscription to *PMLA*, I have never seen anything quite like the ongoing saga of the Richard Levin controversy. . . . Of course, his critics had every right to express their disagreement with him. But rarely have they been content to stop at this; in almost every case they have loaded their artillery with rounds of insult and ad hominem abuse. (353)

As in the case of *CCC* exceptions, such sets were not considered for analysis, but did offer some interesting examples of the personally-focussed, emotionally intense rhetoric seemingly more common to *PMLA* responses and insight into how *PMLA* readers feel about such rhetoric. Such examples and insights are scattered throughout the study, but are also discussed more generally, albeit briefly, in the next section.

OVERALL RESPONSE TYPE

Unlike responses in the other four journals, responses in *PMLA* tend much more toward the emotional and the informal. For example, respondents in *AL* and *JTWC* tend to produce pointed, lengthy, well-organized responses which generally echo the depth and more dispassionate tone of original articles. *EAL* responses are most subtly, sometimes sharply, critical, while *CCC* responses are well-researched, but seem to lean more strongly toward fostering a sense of friendly community.

But responses in *PMLA* do not generally resemble any of these. They are short, as aforestated, typically one and a half pages in length, and many are shorter. Usually,

only a few sentences, if any, are devoted to giving background concerning the article or response being critiqued or to outlining points to be made. Without such formalisms, they often come across more as opinion than solid argument, and also as ~~a~~forestated, as very emotional and colorful. For example, if one reads enough *PMLA* responses one begins to notice an underlying signature tone both caused and characterized by broad swings of passion and emotion as in the following passage from a primary response by Molly Hoff (1990):

*I was at first delighted to see the scholarship of Jane Ellen Harrison's **Ancient Art and Ritual** applied in Woolf criticism by Melba Cuddy-Keane . . . and I expected a closely argued presentation. My pleasure faded when I perceived an error so easily discovered that *PMLA* might have caught it before publication. (122 emphasis added)*

PMLA readers seem to be aware of the existence of such a tone, and occasionally even parody it, as does secondary respondent Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1990):

But I was never foolhardy enough even to attempt to invoke the names of the major critics of black literature, then and now. Miller is rather less cautious than I in this respect. So on his behalf, let me try to calm future correspondents who will be shocked—shocked—at the names curiously omitted from his roster of 'important' critics. For surely it is implicit in his piece (as it was explicit in mine) that he meant only to provide an institutional cross section of convenience and had no ambition to be exhaustive. (1125 emphasis added)

Sometimes, though, the emotional tone seems to become too intense and personally focussed as in these two primary response passages related to Richard Levin's original articles "Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy" (1988) and "The Poetics and Politics of Bardicide" (1990) respectively:

*We are puzzled and disturbed that Richard Levin has made a successful academic career by using the reductive techniques of this essay to bring the same predictable charges indiscriminately against all varieties of contemporary criticism. We wish to know why, in view of the energetic, cogent, sophisticated theoretical debate that is currently taking place within and among schools of Renaissance criticism, *PMLA* has chosen to print a tired, muddled,*

unsophisticated essay that is blind at once to the assumptions of feminist criticism of Shakespeare and to its own. (Adelman, et al. 78)

“Critics” like Levin, on the contrary, pretend that they are serving no interests but only protecting literature from the Sam the Eagletons of the ivory tower who want to take away the readers’ fun. In fact—and though this should be by now commonplace, the publication of such an inept tirade shows that it isn’t—they serve only the continued dominance of a particular gender, class, and culture. (Boyarin 315)

Such intensity, in turn, sometimes causes readers to either protest responses which seem more personally than professionally focussed or, at the very least, argue for more appropriate/successful ways of communicating and criticizing (protests and arguments absent in the other four journals).

For example, in regard to Adelman, et al.’s primary response to Richard Levin, Milton Birnbaum (1989) remarks that “the letter signed by twenty-four individuals reminded me of a course I used to give years ago—Argumentation and Debate—in which we discussed “The Seven Propaganda Devices” (357). He then lists each device—hasty generalization, glittering generalities, name calling, testimonial, stacking the cards, bandwagon (*Just imagine, twenty-four signatories from places as diverse as Canada and England and a cross-section of American universities from Hawaii to Massachusetts—all attacking one sole professor*), and transfer—using statements from the Adelman, et al. response to illustrate each (358). And Dwight H. Purdy (1989) thinks a response like Adelman, et al. is cause to change response paper publication criteria. He writes:

The Editorial Board ought to establish a policy of refusing to publish personal attacks in Forum. The penultimate sentence in the response to Richard Levin insults a distinguished scholar. Because one assumes that letters are scrutinized with some of the same care given to submissions, to print personal attacks on a scholar’s career or character seems to lend them credence, however reasoned the victim’s reply. . . . Treat letters like submissions. Have two members of the Editorial Board read each letter for its probity, fairness, and contribution to the

issue. Inaccuracy and meanness are as reprehensible as sexist language. No more should they be tolerated. (357)

Again, such protests are noticeably absent in the other four journals in this study.

RESPONSE ANALYSIS

“NARRATIVE AGAINST NUCLEAR WAR?” CLAIR JAMES (1991)

This article is a primary response to Peter Schwenger’s “Circling Ground Zero” (1991). In it, James disagrees with Schwenger’s argument that narratives about nuclear war, and other horrible events, can help us avoid such events. Instead, James argues that such narratives can serve as models for creating such events. As different as his views are, however, James seems extremely dispassionate and thorough in his critique, as we see in his opening passage:

I applaud the political statement against nuclear war that Peter Schwenger makes with his article “Circling Ground Zero” (106 [1991]: 251-61), but I feel that his effort misses its mark. . . . Schwenger argues that seeing or experiencing can teach us what cannot be expressed. I agree that by seeing or doing we can sometimes learn something we cannot learn by hearing or reading. But Schwenger’s essay places hearing and reading outside experience, values sight over sound, and risks elevating experience over rational thought. Paradoxically, Schwenger’s argument for knowledge based on experience is similar to arguments for a rational science based on experiment: the scientist must experience every fact, and the record of the experiment is a narrative by which other scientists may relive the experience, thus verifying its reality. (1175)

However, only one of the two readers agreed that such passages represent a dispassionate and thorough critique. Still, although James does not necessarily agree with Schwenger, he does not seem to project Schwenger himself as being a substandard researcher; instead, he *applaud[s]* Schwenger’s goals. One reader agreed with this interpretation, the other disagreed, stating “These aren’t necessarily related. He says, after all, that his argument is flawed. The implications are thus of a failed project.”

James does not characterize Schwenger's arguments as *incorrect*, *fictitious*, etc., but states that the effort *misses its mark*. Asked if such mild language is effective in promoting successful communication, both readers said yes, but one added that it was only successful in that "it gets a response."

Finally, James also attempts a counter-argument based on what he believes to be a paradox inherent in Schwenger's argument. Thus he does not seem to attempt to criticize Schwenger's argument without first offering proof for his own. Asked if submitting a provable counter-argument is a good way to promote successful communication, one reader said yes, while the other had problems with the way the question was phrased, asking, "Is the goal of 'successful communication' verifiable?"

James offers further support for his argument in subsequent passages. For example, in the following passage, James shows that a rereading of one of Schwenger's examples may produce an opposite conclusion:

The bulk of Schwenger's article is devoted to a reading of Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*. Riddley Walker, the protagonist, learns about himself and his culture's history through the narrative that is his life. This is Schwenger's point (much simplified, of course) in discussing Riddley Walker. But Schwenger ignores the sinister implications of Riddley's narrative. People in *Riddley Walker* have not learned through experience. As Riddley walks his "Fools Circle," bringing back the "1 Little 1," gunpowder, he begins to re-create the situation leading to the "Bad Time." He is able to do this *because* of narratives, inherited stories he does not understand. As Riddley learns, the narratives recreate the conditions for destruction. Riddley walks a circle of death, a circle leading always into the nothingness of its nonexistent center. Narrative defines the circle, thus creating experience while leading to ground zero, no experience. (1175).

After demonstrating that his argument is valid, James clearly outlines his own political statement, his purpose for responding, but also realigns himself with Schwenger, and thus seems to create a sense that even though their methods may differ, he and Schwenger are allies in their intentions:

What I want to see is antinarrative that leads away from the experiential knowledge of nuclear war. Possibilities include narratives that deny the necessity of an ending; books (or poems or plays) that deconstruct the idea of narrative itself, exploding the expected logical sequence of events leading to a goal; and utopias, whether narrative or not, that suggest ways of living that are less likely to lead to our destruction. Examples of all these types of texts exist. Rather than presenting as exemplary a book that shows an inevitable circle of destruction, a discussion of some of these other texts would provide a better example of how to make the necessary changes to avoid nuclear war.

I agree with Schwenger that “[n]arrative can help us go through the changes required, step by step, word by word” (260). But we need to walk and write carefully on our way. (1176)

Asked if realigning himself with Schwenger is a good way for James to promote successful communication, one reader said yes, the other both yes and no.

Moreover, agreeing to disagree, signaled here by the words *I agree . . . but . . .* seems to be a good way to stress one’s own arguments without becoming embroiled in a personal attack on another scholar. In this way, successful communication is achieved while criticism is taking place. Asked if they agreed with this assessment, one reader said yes, the other found the question “too loaded.”

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which would seem to be key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as cultivating a dispassionate, thorough critique; validating another scholar’s goals; using mild, non-intense language; offering proof for counter-arguments; realigning oneself with one’s critic; and agreeing to disagree. And yet such positive elements were only considered important to the success of the response by one of the two readers, the other finding the response successful with or without these.

One reader rated this primary response successful, the other very successful overall.

“REPLY,” PETER SCHWENGER (1991)

This article is a secondary response to Clair James’s “Narrative Against Nuclear War?” In it, readers agreed that Schwenger calmly and dispassionately reasserts his original arguments, pointing out a possible glitch in James’s counter-argument without attacking James personally or using intense language in his own defense, as in the following passages:

On the way to his main argument, Clair James sets up a tension between two terms that do not figure prominently in “Circling Ground Zero,” although their presence may be detected there: rationality and experience. The first term appears late in the essay in a quotation from Russell Hoban: “Rationality is not enough to get us through what we have to get through” (260). A modest statement, neither a celebration of irrationality nor even a condemnation of rationality. The second term, experience, is not mine, but I take it as the equivalent of that “not enough,” the ongoing remainder of rational thought. My essay, according to James, “risks elevating experience over rational thought.” I accept that risk.

For James, it seems to me, runs an opposite and corresponding risk. His reading of scientific experiment as experience, recorded by narrative for rational purposes, seems to be an attempt to collapse experience into a rational matrix in order to elevate the rational—though he only concludes that for me “[t]he distinction . . . between experiential knowledge and knowledge gained through rational thinking does not exist.” That is, true scientific thinking commonly involves more than the rational: in the history of nuclear weaponry, I think of Szilard suddenly apprehending nuclear chain reaction while waiting for a traffic light to change; . . . (1176)

Although Schwenger notes that some of James’s terminology does not *figure prominently* in his original essay, he does not dismiss James’s argument on these grounds, and instead enters into a discussion of rationality as it *does* bear on his argument and James’s response. By doing this, Schwenger seems to help enlarge the discussion, instead of thwarting it by discounting James’s comments. However, only one of the two readers agreed with this assessment.

Schwenger's firm but polite comment *I accept that risk* and his calm exploration of James's *opposite and corresponding risk* seems to imply that his involvement in the discussion is more professional than personal, an implication which would in turn seem to strengthen his scholarly credibility. But asked if they thought this implication strengthens Schwenger's scholarly credibility, readers were divided; one reader said yes, the other simply found Schwenger's comments to be a "highly stylized motif."

Schwenger also supports the reiteration of his original arguments with fresh examples, as we see in his discussion of Szilard and the existence of a certain non-rational type of scientific thinking. And in his final statements, he seems to recognize the validity of James's arguments and sources as well, putting aside any personal *reservations* to show, as did James in the final paragraph of his primary response, that he and his critic are allied in sharing the same primary *concern[s]*:

James refers to Derrida's essay "No Apocalypse, Not Now" in making his main argument that the narrative imagination of nuclear disaster is a force that may accelerate war. . . . If the nuclear age is constructed by the fable, Derrida goes on to assert, the age may be deconstructed as well; and this for him is the responsibility of the nuclear critic. Without dwelling on my reservations about this claim, I will merely say that a narrative . . . may of course contribute to nuclear war: there are many narratives of nuclear war as orgasmic release, as punishment and purification, as survival, even as victory. However, narratives need not be written in such a manner. The question is how literature is to be written to enable us to go through the changes needed. And this is my concern as well as James's. (1176)

Both readers indeed agreed that reiterating his argument through fresh examples and allying himself with his critic are good techniques for James to use in promoting successful professional communication.

General Diagnosis: As in the case of the James's previous response, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more

positive stylistic elements such as reasserting arguments calmly and dispassionately; reiterating arguments through fresh examples; and allying oneself with one's critic. Validating the primary respondent's terms of discussion, and showing professional involvement, were also elements which seemed to have a positive effect. One reader found this secondary response very successful, the other successful overall.

"BEN JONSON AT TABLE," GARY SCHMIDGALL (1991)

This article is a primary response to Bruce Thomas Boehrer's "Renaissance Overeating: The Sad Case of Ben Jonson" (1990). In it, Schmidgall strongly disagrees with Boehrer's reading of Jonson's "Inviting a Friend to Supper." Although Schmidgall couches his opposition in what seems to be rather cutting, though mostly harmless wit, a closer look at the response seems to reveal some subtle violations of the Rules of Politeness. However, only one of the readers agreed with this general assertion. Still, notice how Schmidgall describes Boehrer in the following passage:

Cheekily eschewing the usual view of the poem as a forthright occasional piece intended to amuse, charm, and cajole, Boehrer reads behind and between the lines with the squint eyes of a Malvolio. Indeed, he seems to look down from a great height on a disingenuous, morally compromised, conspicuously consuming Ben Jonson rather as Malvolio views Sir Toby Belch. Thus Boehrer terms the poem an "eleven-course exercise in literary dyspepsia" (1077); for him, Jonson describes "immoderate, even hypersophisticated pleasures" (true, Tacitus is now seldom encountered at dinner parties) but seriously tries to palm them off as "simple and poor" (1074); and Jonson becomes a table tyrant "occupying an absolutist position within his poem" (1075). This leads in due course to a climactic assertion of "the wholesale transformation of Jonson's moral and aesthetic ideals" under the pressure of "Jacobean absolutism" (1081). (317)

Normally, describing another scholar personally (and unfavorably) as *having the squint eyes of a Malvolio* is not considered polite within a scholarly context. But again only one of the readers considered this remark a violation of the Rules of Politeness. Notice that Boehrer is twice compared to the unsavory Malvolio, after which Schmidgall seems

to continue to imply that Boehrer has either twisted or invented facts to suit his interpretation (*seriously tries to palm them off*). Also, Schmidgall seems to continue to imply this in many subsequent statements, such as the following:

- Sustaining such a solemn thesis in the face of the poem's many witty gambits, however, requires much strain. (317)
- Boehrer, however, contorts "free" to mean "gluttonously" and asserts that the "extended oxymoron" thus invented "encompasses the instability of Jonson's rhetoric" (1073). (317)
- In order to bolster this invention of gluttony so crucial to his thesis, Boehrer must exaggerate the menu. (317)
- Boehrer also bolsters Jonson's sad case of gluttony by ignoring the obvious humor of so many promises made with contingencies attached (only mutton, cheese, and fruit are offered certainly). (318)

The point here is that so many negative assertions of this kind, especially ones which repeatedly use verbs implying counter-factive writer's stance, such as *contort* and *bolster*, only seem to support the comparison of Boehrer with Malvolio, and in turn seem to violate the Rules of Politeness by continuing to paint Boehrer as being at best a rather untrustworthy, unsavory character, and at worst a critic lacking imagination and interpretive skill. Yet the readers were again divided on this point, one agreeing, one disagreeing with the preceding assertion.

Consider a final passage from this response:

And a knack for negative spin causes him to interpret the lines in which Jonson promises that no spies or gossips will be present and that the conversation will be—and stay—off the record as "a series of policing gestures" that establish "a process of rigorous surveillance instituted and controlled by the host" (1075). *Animal Farm* figures elsewhere in the essay; here allusion to 1984 would have seemed apt. (318)

This passage seems to be another example of Schmidgall's failure to take Boehrer seriously, describing him as having *a knack for negative spin* and poking fun at Boehrer

for observing the same serious environment in Jonson's England as Orwell envisions in the Big Brother extremes of *1984*. But readers were again divided on this point; asked if they thought Schmidgall is being somewhat condescending in this passage and failing to take Boehrer seriously, one reader said yes, the other no.

General Diagnosis: In this case, both violations of the Rules of Politeness and the use of intense, negative verbs had a limited adverse affect on the overall success of the response, as did related negative elements such as the use of a condescending tone.

But the readers did come to opposite conclusions when asked to rate this primary response overall: one reader said very unsuccessful, the other successful.

“REPLY,” BRUCE THOMAS BOEHRER (1991)

This article is a secondary response to Gary Schmidgall's “Ben Jonson at Table.” In it, Boehrer attempts to defend himself and his sense of humor from Schmidgall's criticism. Although his response seems less intensely personal than Schmidgall's, it also seems clear that his own primary purpose is to defend his honor, not to assert the validity of his original arguments. However, only one reader agreed with this interpretation, the other disagreed, commenting that “the point of the exchange is the author's attitude toward Jonson's invitation to dinner. It *does* matter how a reader of the poem views feasting—as Malvolio, as Hal, as Falstaff, etc.” Thus according to the second reader, a personal defense is necessary due to the topic of this particular response.

Now consider the following passages:

Gary Schmidgall tries hard—and wittily—to turn my essay on Jonson into an artifact of high seriousness. He tries so hard, in fact, that he ends up doing to my work what he accuses me to doing to Jonson's: “occupying an absolutist position” within it to the exclusion of the author's voice. Of course, this sort of

treatment comes with our professional territory, and I don't object to it as such; but it does add another layer of irony to the present exchange.

Schmidgall starts off on a rather unpleasant personal note, likening me to a "squint-eyed" and "humorless" Malvolio who looks down on Jonson "from a great [moral] height." Clearly my comic exertions were lost on him, yet I trust I can laugh as well as the next person. However, I would also hope that—like Prince Hal, not Malvolio—I can both appreciate Falstaffian humor and understand its deficiencies. And to do so, it seems to me, requires no great pretense to moral superiority—only the ability to recognize socially compromised behavior and the willingness to think about it when one sees it. (319)

Note the verb *accuse*, which implies negative author's stance. This seems to be an awfully emotionally-loaded verb for one who doesn't really *object to . . . this sort of treatment*. Thus one suspects that Boehrer is feeling a little put-upon and irritated, especially since he chooses to align himself with what might be termed one of Shakespeare's "better characters," *Prince Hal* instead of *Malvolio*, and points to himself as having *the ability to recognize socially compromised behavior and the willingness to think about it when [he] sees it*. Indeed, both readers agreed that the verb *accuse*, the Prince Hal/Malvolio comparison, and the statement regarding ability all indicate overly emotional involvement. But when asked if Boehrer's making such a statement in regard to himself implies that Schmidgall does not necessarily share this ability (violates Maxim of Quality), the readers were divided; one agreed while one replied, "No, not necessarily."

However, further proof that Boehrer is responding in part out of personal insult may lie in his seemingly overly intense criticism of Schmidgall's scholarly abilities, as we see in the next passage:

Furthermore, while arguing over the composition of Jonson's banquet, Schmidgall displays his own distinct political bias as well. For when he revealingly likens Jonson's meal to a "holiday spread—Fourth of July or at most Thanksgiving" and opts for "laissez-faire humanism" over my putative severity,

he re-creates Jonsonian dining in the benign image of the American middle class. To do so is an error; it betrays both what is at stake in Schmidgall's reading of Jonson and what is lacking in Schmidgall's faculties of imagination and compassion. Indeed, it is remarkable that a scholar of Schmidgall's intelligence and talent can't imagine places where a Fourth of July spread would seem obscenely extravagant. And I would respectfully question any Renaissance scholarship that discerns in Jonson's early career as a bricklayer's apprentice the forms and bounty of American holiday dining. In any case, I doubt that either Jonson's table behavior or middle-American consumerism supplies a practical model of ideal temperance; and Schmidgall and I will simply have to disagree on that point. (319)

Pointing to Schmidgall's *political bias*, characterizing part of Schmidgall's reading as *an error*, and commenting on his critic's *lack in . . . faculties of imagination and compassion*, Boehrer seems to use intense, negative terms to mount the same sort of personal defense evident in Schmidgall's primary response. Both readers agreed with this assessment, one finding it "right on the money" since "the difference between these two [Schmidgall and Boehrer] is very political at base."

Boehrer does seem to rebound somewhat, returning to a calmer mode of discussion in the next passage:

Beyond this quarrel, however, I am impressed at how much Schmidgall and I agree on. We agree, for instance, that "Jonson was . . . brilliant at having things both ways" and that he paid for his success with his moral corruption. . . . But Schmidgall wants to minimize these points of agreement, either dismissing them as unimportant or ignoring them altogether. Thus, for instance, he takes me to task for "singling out" Jonson's courtly behavior. But apparently Schmidgall fell asleep during my discussion of James I's and Christian IV's antics and my remarks about Lord Hay's dining practices and my reference to Lord Coleraine's unfortunate prandial demise. Or perhaps he thinks these passages were a kind of cryptic intrusion, à la *Twin Peaks*, of somebody else's universe into my own. If so, I would urge him to reconsider. (319)

However, only one of the readers agreed that this passage represents a calmer mode of discussion. Notice though, that although Boehrer seems to attempt to establish a more appropriate form of scholarly discussion by citing *points of agreement*, he still negatively characterizes the exchange not as a discussion, but a *quarrel*. But when

asked if such characterization is a poor way to promote successful communication, readers were again divided; one reader replied “yes,” the other “no” since “quarrelling is a form of communication.”

Finally, using so many negative verbs—*minimize*, *ignore*, *fell* [*asleep*] (counterfactive writer’s stance) and *dismiss* and *take* [*to task*] (negative author’s stance)—to characterize Schmidgall’s response seems to be an insult to Schmidgall and his scholarly qualifications. Both readers agreed with this assessment, one adding that “this is far too personal and gratuitous.” Thus when Boehrer comments in his final paragraph that he *found [the] piece amusing* and *enjoyed reading it*, it is difficult to believe that his *thank[s]* are sincere, not sarcastic. Still, when asked their opinion, only one reader thought the remark sarcastic, the other did not.

General Diagnosis: In this case, the use of intense, negative verbs had a significant affect on the success of the response, while Maxim violations and the use of intense language had a more limited affect. Other related negative stylistic elements, such as abandoning the professional purpose of the response in order to save face also had a limited affect as did positive stylistic elements such as a calmer mode of discussion.

Again, the readers disagreed on an overall rating of this secondary response, one finding it very unsuccessful, the other very successful. The fact that *other PMLA* readers found the exchange inappropriate under the circumstances is evidenced in the words of a reader who wrote to offer her own, less defensive reading of Jonson’s poem. This respondent referred to the Schmidgall/Boehrer exchange as “the quarreling of Schmidgall and Boehrer” and cited amusement at seeing “two men accusing each other of lacking a sense of humor” (Solheim 1181).

“SCIENCE AND METAPHOR,” PAISLEY LIVINGSTON (1993)

This article is a primary response to Liliane Papin’s “This Is Not a Universe” (1993), which could be described as calm, scholarly comparison of literary and scientific writing. But Livingston’s response seems disproportionately intense, beginning almost with the first words:

Although I was pleased to see in *PMLA* an essay on science and literature, Liliane Papin’s “This Is not a Universe: Metaphor, Language, and Representation” is disappointing because the author simply reproduces the familiar claims and limitations of a large vein of work in the area. Beginning with the usual condemnation of that undefined nemesis “positivist science,” Papin goes on to amplify the antirealist notion that scientific language is metaphoric and is unable to convey knowledge of a mind-independent natural reality. This constructivist “finding” is said to have the happy result of closing the gap between the natural sciences and literature: Papin concludes with the idea that “we are all poets and the world is our metaphor” (1264). (547)

When asked however, if they thought this response seems disproportionately intense in comparison to Papin’s original article, both readers said no.

Notice, though, that Livingston does not linger on *pleased*, but moves quickly on to *disappointing*, a mildly intense term. Soon, though, Livingston has classified Papin’s opening statement as a *condemnation*, although the reader of the dispassionate original article would be unlikely to see it as such. Asked, then, if such language intensity is appropriate here, both readers said yes (which makes sense, since they did not find Livingston’s response disproportionately intense in general).

Livingston’s language intensity seems to increase in subsequent passages as we see here:

Papin’s article is a fine instance of what Fred Crews has recently called “duty-free interdisciplinarity,” the tendency among literary critics to ignore the standards and results of the fields from which they borrow. This facile interdisciplinary strategy is especially unacceptable when it is a matter of reducing the complexities of extraordinary—and at times

terrifying—discoveries in the natural sciences to a single error about the metaphoric nature of scientific (and all) language.

The shortcoming I have in mind is especially salient in Papin's remarks on AIDS-related research. Citing only one source on the topic—an article in *Le point*—Papin contends that AIDS research suffers from a basic epistemological problem, that of relying on Western science's emphasis on fragmentation and segmentation. Instead of looking for a "magic bullet" to cure the virus, we need a "global" research strategy that "links the syndrome to a background of general health" (1263-64). I find it irresponsible for a literary critic to pronounce on such a complex issue in this casual manner, and I am particularly concerned about the dangers of shifting the emphasis from properly political to epistemological matters. (548)

Characterizing Papin's article *as an instance of . . . "duty-free interdisciplinarity,"* in which, like other literary critics, Papin has been *irresponsible* in *ignoring* crucial information in favor of an *unacceptable* and *facile interdisciplinary strategy* is intense criticism indeed and seems to cast serious doubt on Papin's scholarly legitimacy. However, only one of the readers agreed that such intense language casts doubt on Papin's scholarly legitimacy. Also, it would seem that Livingston could have made his points just as easily without this negative focus on Papin's research and reputation. But only one reader agreed with this assessment, the other disagreed, believing that "his 'points' are not separable from his style."

Readers were also asked if mentioning Papin's lack of sources, for instance, and letting this fact speak for itself without labeling it a *shortcoming* would seem to put Livingston in a more objective, credible position; both readers said no.

But Livingston's use of intensely negative labeling continues to suggest a personal attack on Papin, as in the next passage:

Papin's ideas are about as selective and underargued as are her pronouncements on science. It is embarrassing to see the author of a *PMLA* article trot out the "discoveries" of Benjamin Whorf at a time when linguists and philosophers of language have abandoned his wild claims and have offered instead an array of rigorous hypotheses and models. The literature on Whorf and Sapir presents

many conceptual and empirical arguments against accepting the idea that different natural languages “construct” incommensurable “realities” for the communities of agents who speak the languages. One standard objection is that if this thesis were true, no one could know that it was since no single language could offer neural access to the world of incommensurable and radically distinct systems of language-reality. Is Whorfian relativity, then, just the effect of a language? Which language is that? Papin’s treatment of these and related issues is uninformed and superficial. (548)

Calling Papin’s ideas *selective and underargued*, her behavior *embarrassing* and dated, and her treatment of weighty issues *uninformed and superficial* would seem overly intense in a professional scholarly context; Livingston does everything but state outright that Papin is sad excuse for a scholar and her article is poorly-researched drivel, and so seems to lose sight of what should be his primary communicative purpose, refuting the arguments inherent in Papin’s article. However, the first reader did not think that such intensely negative labeling signals a personal attack on Papin, and the second reader said both yes and no. Readers were also divided as to whether such terms are appropriate in a scholarly context, one replying “yes,” the other “no.”

General Diagnosis: In this case, the use of intense language and violations of the Rules of Politeness had only a limited affect on the success of the response. In spite of its language intensity, both readers rated this primary response successful overall. One reader added that “One may sharply criticize another’s research in a response provided that one does so responsibly with evidence to support one’s position. While at times somewhat harsh, Livingston generally plays fair.”

“REPLY,” LILIANE PAPIN (1993)

This article is a secondary response to Paisley Livingston’s “Science and Metaphor.” Both readers agreed that Papin does an excellent job of calmly reasserting her own arguments while refuting Livingston’s. She begins on a pleasant note,

appreciat[ing] Livingston's *comments and concerns* and moves quickly on through a concise refutation which, with the possible exception of the term *accusation*, seems to be anything but a personal attack.

I appreciate Paisley Livingston's comments and concerns. His main accusation, as I understand it, is that my article lacks "rigorous standards" and uses a "highly exclusionary" theoretical canon. Yes, of course, I was selective—and was bound to be—just as Livingston is selective in the authors he recommends to me, who support his own point of view. A never-ending debate. David Bohm, Ilya Prigogine, John Von Neumann, to cite a few, are "rigorous" physicists and scientists who explore the metaphoric nature and role of language and the problem of representation in science even though they themselves belong to "robust" scientific disciplines.

I do cite only one source, in *Le point*, for my remark on AIDS. The quotation I provide, however, is from Luc Montagnier, Nobel Prize laureate and specialist on AIDS who can hardly be accused of ignoring the complexities of the AIDS question and "hoping for a properly magic solution." Besides, please let's not turn science into a modern religion and scientists into high priests or untouchables holding the truth. *That development*, in my view, would be much more dangerous than an "irresponsible" comment from a mere "literary critic." (548-549)

Notice that by agreeing with Livingston's assessment that she is somewhat *selective*, Papin seems to take the sting out of his comment, and by noting that all authors are slightly selective in deference to their viewpoints, she projects her actions as professional, not unprofessional. However only one reader agreed completely with this assessment, the other replying "yes and no."

Papin also points out that she has used members of scientific disciplines as sources, and includes logical justification for the lack of sources behind her remarks on AIDS research. And her tone throughout her response seems either unemotional and offhand (as we see in the phrase *please let's not . . .*) or slightly surprised and amused at the heat of Livingston's criticism (*That development, in my view, would be much more dangerous than an "irresponsible" comment from a mere "literary critic"*). Asked if

they agreed that a lack of defensiveness allows Papin to communicate more successfully, readers were divided, one replying “yes,” the other, “no.”

Papin seems to stand firmly behind her belief in certain theories and though Livingston glosses over these theories, dismissing them altogether as *wild claims*, Papin explains them in a way that makes them seem reasonable:

I did “trot out” Benjamin Whorf and will probably trot him out again, however “embarrassing” this might be. I was and am well aware of the controversy around him. I happen to be a sincere and fervent admirer of his work, and I refuse to let him be buried once and for all. In my personal experience, for one thing, I find his work more and more relevant. I am now living in Japan and studying Japanese. French is my native language, and I lived in the United States for many years. I have also studied several Western languages. I am absolutely convinced that we do construct different realities through language. . . . Although the work of Whorf and Sapir might not seem scientific enough to many, I still find it a unique source of inspiration and do not feel the least “embarrassed” by it. (549)

Readers were asked, then, if a reasonable explanation on Papin’s part makes Livingston’s intensity seem, in turn, unreasonable; neither reader thought this was the case.

Finally, characterizing herself as a speaker of several languages and a close observer of several cultures seems to be relevant information concerning Papin’s qualifications. Thus the remark seems to bolster Papin’s argument without tearing down Livingston’s. However, only one reader agreed completely with this assessment, the other replying “yes and no.” And Papin’s refusal to be *embarrassed*, a refusal that is delivered without negative language intensity, seems to show her to be a mature professional, not the third-rate scholar some readers might picture after reading Livingston’s primary response. But asked if they found this to be the case, only one reader agreed the other disagreeing since “third-rate” is a relative classification.

General Diagnosis: In this case, it is the *lack* of maxim violations, use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules and Politeness, and the use of generally intense language which seems key. Instead, we see here more positive stylistic elements such as calmly reasserting one's arguments while refuting one's critic's arguments; agreeing with one's critic's assessments; and proving one's own expertise without disparaging one's critic. A lack of defensiveness seen in the lack of language intensity also seemed to have a positive affect. Both readers found this secondary response successful overall.

"THE CERVANTINE TERCENTENARY," JOHN DOWLING (1995)

This article is a primary response to James D. Fernández's "The Bonds of Patrimony: Cervantes and the New World." Technically, Dowling's purpose in responding seems to be to alert Fernández to an error concerning the date of Cervantes's death. However, his real purpose seems to be to use the response forum to wax eloquent in showcasing his extensive knowledge of history and letters, as we see in his first paragraph:

In his curious and enjoyable article, "The Bonds of Patrimony: Cervantes and the New World," (109 [1994]: 969-81), James D. Fernández notes incidentally that José Enrique Rodó's essay "El centenario de Cervantes" was "[w]ritten in 1915, on the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of Cervantes's death" (969). He would more accurately have said "in anticipation of the three-hundredth anniversary of Cervantes's death," for the author of *Don Quixote* died in 1616, the same year that Shakespeare went to his grave. Indeed, it was supposed that they died on the same day, 23 April; and in some verses preserved in an earlier edition (11th, 1938) of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*, the American poet and Hispanist Thomas Walsh (1875-1928) expresses this notion under the title "April Twenty-Third" (265)

However, when asked if they thought that Dowling's reason for responding is to "show-off" his knowledge, readers were divided. One said yes, the other "no; he's writing like an old-fashioned antiquarian."

Given that Fernández's mention of the date in question is indeed *incidental* and extremely peripheral to his original article, Dowling's extensive discussion of related legend and verse seems hardly relevant or necessary (violates Maxim of Relation). Both readers agreed with this assessment, but one argued that "it's not supposed to be. Dowling is offering a literary curiosity. This is the kind of stuff that used to be published in the British *Notes and Queries*."

After quoting from Walsh, Dowling continues to expound on the subject for three more paragraphs, entering into a brief discussion of the differences between the old and new style calendars and drawing a parallel between Walsh's verse and that of John Keats, whom he also quotes. Asked if they thought all of this information is necessary in some regard (violates Maxim of Relation), one reader said no, the other "yes, to his antiquarian purpose."

When Dowling does come full circle and return to his original theme, the incorrect date, his language intensity seems to reveal another possible reason for his response:

Still, 1616, and not 1615, is the undisputed year of Cervantes's death, and Fernández may wonder that the "eagle eyes" of a *PMLA* editor did not catch the error. Perhaps he may console himself with the words of a tolerant Spaniard who once told me—in my despondence at having committed some such mistake—that errata, like rats, are ever with us. (266)

By using emotionally intense words like *console* and *despondence*, instead of less intense terms, Dowling seems to imply that Fernández's mistake is larger and weightier than it really is. He even uses the verb *committed*, more often used with a direct object like *crime* than *mistake*, to characterize Fernández's actions. Thus the intensity of his terms indicate than another (inappropriate) purpose for his response may be to make a personal dig at a fellow researcher and possibly the quality of his research. But only one reader thought this was the case, the other replying, "no, he's being funny."

General Diagnosis: In this case, compared to other factors, Maxim violations seemed to have a significant adverse affect on the success of the response, while failure to support purpose (seeming instead to “show off” knowledge), using intense negative verbs, and using intense language had a more limited affect.

One reader found this primary response very unsuccessful overall, adding that, “Without trying to sound like Dowling, and inevitably I will, this man needs more hobbies! To pick apart what he himself calls an *enjoyable article* based on a side fact that isn’t salient—isn’t even of peripheral importance—is such a monumental waste of academic space that it astounds me. Are you sure the editors didn’t put it in as a bit of humor?” But the other reader found the response successful overall, given that it would be successful *in the right context*, adding that “the tone here is the key. Compare it with the *N&Q* of about 30-40 years ago, maybe even earlier.”

“REPLY,” JAMES D. FERNANDEZ (1995)

This article is a secondary response to John Dowling’s “The Cervantine Tercentenary.” Like Dowling’s response, it also seems to violate the general purpose of the scholarly response paper since it seems to have little to contribute to the true scholarly exchange of information. Although it would be difficult to blame Fernández for being a little annoyed with Dowling’s superfluous and somewhat condescending response to his original article, Fernández’s own subtly sarcastic response seems almost as inappropriate, no matter how apt. Both readers disagreed with this assessment, one because the response is “witty” and thus “in the tradition of scholarly, gentlemanly sparring.” Because the response is so short, it appears here in its entirety:

Though I am curious to know why John Dowling found my article curious, I am genuinely happy to have provided him with some enjoyment. I am even glad

that my essay gave him an occasion to offer *PMLA* readers his witty string of quotations. My consideration of the history of centennials, anniversaries, and other such commemorations has taught me two things: (1) such occasions—like opportunities—are not so much discovered as they are invented or fabricated (sometimes, like Cervantes’s third centennial, over the course of the years, other times in days, weeks, or months); and (2) occasionally the issues addressed on such occasions have something to do with the original event or text that occasioned them; occasionally they do not. (266)

It is difficult to accept that Fernández is *genuinely happy* about Dowling’s response (violates Maxim of Quality)), and both readers agree that he is not. His comments concerning Dowling’s *string of witty quotations* and *occasions* which do and do not have something to do with original events and texts, seem to imply somewhat sarcastically his belief that Dowling is using a tiny, insignificant error from Fernández’s article, to show off his own knowledge. But readers were divided on this assessment, one agreeing, one disagreeing.

In most cases, given that Dowling’s response seems purposeless and based on something insignificant, it would seem that Fernández should not have responded in kind. One reader agreed with this assessment, but the other disagreed, believing that as in the Dowling response, the tone was not truly serious, or would not be considered so in the appropriate context.

General Diagnosis: In this case Maxim violations had only a limited effect on the overall success of the response, as did related negative elements such as failure to fulfill the purpose of the response.

Obviously, the two readers rated this secondary response very differently, one as very successful, the other as very unsuccessful depending on how they viewed the motives of the primary respondent and the context of the primary response. However, the reader who *did not* recognize Dowling’s behavior as that of an “old-fashioned

antiquarian” understandingly found Fernández’s response inappropriate, stating that “although anger is a factor, the only way to win true respect would be to not even dignify the letter with a response. . . . if he must address Dowling, he should only address the fact in question.”

“BIRTH OF THE CYBERQUEER,” WILLIAM B. HUNTER (1996)

This article is a primary response to Donald Morton’s “Birth of the Cyberqueer” (1995). In it, Hunter criticizes not the content, but the style of Morton’s original article. Morton’s style is so bad, Hunter claims, that it is impossible to understand or judge the content. Because the response is so short, it appears here in its entirety:

I found it quite impossible to understand the first sentence of Donald Morton’s “Birth of the Cyberqueer” (110 [1995]: 369–81) and so read no further. Instead, to explain my failure, I turned to statistics. From a hurried count, I found that this sentence has about ninety words, twelve commas, one colon, one pair of parentheses, and two words identified by quotation marks as bearing special meanings. It includes several current buzzwords, opaque to all except a few initiates: ludic, textuality, commonality, libidinal economy. The purpose of such a sentence is clearly not communication of information but verbal virtuosity. I contend that this is bad writing by any definition.

Shouldn’t *PMLA*’s editorial readers insist on good style as well as good content? Or does this opening sentence seem queer only to me?

Second, I think that we have had enough of the coy puns made within words with parentheses (the first sentence contains one). Users of this device must view themselves as (a)cute critics, but I increasingly find such clichés merely (ped)antic and ludic(rous) crap(ulence). (133)

First, Hunter’s accounting of Morton’s flawed style seems more than enough proof for his argument; calling the article *bad writing*, instead of describing it in more diplomatic, less intense terms such as *difficult to read*, for instance, seems tantamount to insulting a fellow scholar’s abilities. Such an insult is not likely to result in any communicative breakthroughs on the subject of style. Asked if they agreed one reader said yes, while the other offered no response. And asked if they thought it would have been more

professional for Hunter to use more diplomatic, less intense descriptive terms such as *difficult to read*, one reader said yes, while the other again did not respond. Finally, asked if they thought Hunter's language is more likely to personally offend Morton than to result in any communicative breakthroughs on the subject of style, readers were divided, one replying "yes," the other "no."

Although Hunter does not criticize Morton by name, he seems to come close enough in his disdainful mention of certain users of *coy puns* who see themselves as *(a)cute critics* even though their criticism is really just *(ped)antic and ludic(rous) crap(ulence)*. The use of such intense terms implies that Hunter has very little opinion of Morton as a scholar, and even serves to belittle Morton and his methods. One reader agreed with this assessment outright, the other replied, "More than the rest of the essay."

In addition, Hunter's asserts that *The purpose of such a sentence is clearly not communication of information but verbal virtuosity*, the greater implication being that Morton's entire paper, not just one sentence, is an exercise in verbal virtuosity. This could be construed as a violation of the Maxim of Quantity; Hunter has no proof that Morton is not making an earnest effort to convey information, even though Morton's choice of vocabulary may seem far from standard. Asked if such an implication is appropriate given that Hunter presents no proof that Morton's efforts are not in earnest, one reader replied, "no" the other, "to Hunter's argument, yes."

Asked if they thought that Hunter's tone makes it difficult for successful communication to take place, one reader said yes, the other offered no response. And asked if—even if they agreed with Hunter's assessment—they thought its intensity inappropriate in a professional scholarly context, one reader said yes, the other no.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations and intense language had only a limited affect on the overall success of the response. But Hunter's response is one that is difficult to critique objectively, because many readers (myself included) agreed with him. One *PMLA* reader, Susan Balée, even wrote in defense of Hunter's response, stating:

I, too, tried to read that article and found that it firmly resisted my efforts, despite my experience as a reader of both literature and theory (I hold a PhD from Columbia and produced my dissertation under the mentorship of Jonathan Arac and Jean Howard). Morton's prose style effectively bars all readers other than those who have read what he has read and think as he thinks from appreciating his essay. (470)

However, other readers felt Hunter's tone made it impossible for successful communication to take place. Chidsey Dickson, another *PMLA* reader who commented on the exchange, referred to it not as *communication* or *dialogue*, which would have implied a positive learning situation, but as *trad[ing] quips*, an event where nothing substantive takes place at all (471).

The readers in the current study were divided, one finding Hunter's response unsuccessful, the other successful overall.

“REPLY,” DONALD MORTON (1996)

This article is a secondary response to William B. Hunter's primary response which appears under the title of the original article, “Birth of the Cyberqueer.” Here, Morton seems to lash out defensively, violating several maxims along the way:

What is instructive [about Hunter's complaint] is the “logic” by which Hunter concludes that my essay is an example of “bad writing.” Having failed to “understand the first sentence,” he decided to read “no further.” Anxious over his “failure” as a reader, he converts it into my failure as writer. Instead of admitting that he is not familiar with the range of concepts used in my sentences and does not wish to bother to acquire the knowledges [sic] necessary to comprehending the text, he proposes that the failure of communication is the

result of the presence, beginning in the first sentence, of unusual punctuation and “buzzwords.” Hence he shifts from reading to counting and compiles statistics to show that the “bad style” of the first sentence is characteristic of the entire text, which is also therefore unreadable. (133)

Asked if they thought that Morton lashes out defensively in his response, one reader said yes, “somewhat,” while the other did not respond, questioning the force of the verb “lashes.”

As to violating the Maxims, Morton seems to violate the Maxim of Quality by attempting a pseudo-psychological analysis of Hunter for which he has no proof; in other words, Morton implies that Hunter’s response does not spring from legitimate complaint, but is instead caused by some sort of personal *anxi[ety]*. Asked, then, if such an analysis is appropriate in a professional scholarly context, one reader said no, the other “yes; these things are part of the dynamic. What would be inappropriate is hard to clarify.” Hence in this instance, violating the Maxim of Quality would not necessarily affect the overall success of the response.

Morton again seems to violate the Maxim of Quality by making the following statement: *Instead of admitting that he [Hunter] is not familiar with the range of concepts used in my sentences and does not wish to bother to acquire the knowledges [sic] necessary to comprehending the text, he proposes that the failure of communication is the result of the presence, beginning in the first sentence, of unusual punctuation and “buzzwords.”* This statement is only partially true. Hunter does indeed admit to being unfamiliar with many of Morton’s terms, describing them as *opaque to all except a few initiates*. However, Hunter says nothing about being unwilling to learn this *range of concepts* if knowledge of these is the only key to understanding the Morton article, which it is not. For example, although Hunter, like

Morton, seems to understand each mark of punctuation in itself, it is much harder to juggle the “prompts” given by each mark of punctuation when the article is cluttered with them. Morton’s statement, then seems not only incomplete, but over-simplified. Given these facts, readers were asked if they thought Morton’s statement appropriate. But readers were again divided; one reader said no, the other yes, stating again that “these things are part of the dynamic.” Thus once again, violating the Maxim of Quality would not necessarily affect the overall success of the response.

In addition, Morton seems to violate the Maxim of Relation, as we see in the following passage:

By throwing the emphasis on style, Hunter—like (post)modern theorists—erases the importance of concepts from the scene of contestation. Proceeding in a relatively unsophisticated mode, Hunter still manages to read, like Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*, so as “to succeed in shifting the signified [the conceptual] a great distance [away]” (trans. Richard Miller [New York: Hill, 1975] 67). The politics of this shifting from concepts to rhetoric becomes clear in a response to a recent accusation of sexual harassment at Syracuse University. When a student filed a grievance against a faculty member, an observer rushed in early to discount it on the grounds that the student displayed “poor writing skills” (*Post-Standard* [Syracuse] 12 Apr. 1995: A11). (134)

Here, Morton seems to violate the Maxim of Relation, or appears to do so, by comparing Hunter’s criticism of his article with the biased treatment of a writing student who accused an instructor of sexual harassment. In doing so, Morton, as Balée puts it, seems to “suddenly shift from the initial site of contestation—his murky prose—to an entirely different locus,” taking “criticism leveled at a seemingly unrelated topic—grammar, syntax, [and] style” and “twist[ing] [it] into a criticism of sexual preference” (471). The issue of style seems central to the former case, peripheral to the latter, making the analogy thus irrelevant, especially since it takes the reader quite a while to draw a parallel and make some sort of meaningful connection. But asked if

they found this analogy to be appropriate and relevant in this context, readers were divided, one replying “yes,” the other, “no.” Hence this particular violation of the Maxim of Relation may or may not have significant impact on the overall success of the response.

In his final paragraph, Morton seems to violate the Maxim of Quality several more times:

Hunter’s letter is symptomatic of larger political and economic tendencies. His text on the difficulties of reading is an attempt to obscure the need for conceptual literacy and to relegitimize the lessons of ludic reading practices by displacing the concern for thought with concern for style in a quiet manner (that is, without elaborate theoretical justification). At times like the present, when the workings of exploitative power are so evident (in the Gingrich era of right-wing ascendancy), this kind of substitution and diversion is just what the bourgeois academy needs. This is why there is a boom in rhetoric studies—graduate students now entering the profession are diverted from conceptual work and seduced into rhetoric and composition studies. While done in the name of empowering students, this diversion is meant to prevent them from conceptually grasping the workings of power in the bourgeois academy and its underlying economic interests. (134)

Here, Morton’s violations of the Maxim of Quality seem almost paranoid. Calling Hunter’s response *symptomatic of larger political and economic tendencies*, asserting that Hunter is *attempt[ing] to obscure the need for conceptual literacy*, [etc.], and implying that Hunter’s response is similar in some way to political *workings of exploitative power*, would all seem to be Quality violations because they cannot be proved. But neither reader found these unproved statements inappropriate, one asking, “What would constitute proof?” Thus these particular violations of the Maxim of Quality would not seem to damage the overall success of the response, at least where these readers are concerned.

However, Morton seems to be so swept up in his need to save face that he seems ready to accuse any critic of any ulterior motive, no matter how unlikely or

unsupportable. This theory would seem to be supported by the intensity of the counter-factive verb *seduce*, a verb Morton uses to describe how graduate students are *diverted from conceptual work* in order to prevent them from *conceptually grasping the workings of power in the bourgeois academy and its underlying economic interest*. But both readers disagreed with this assessment.

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations had only a limited effect on the success of the response, while the use of intense negative verbs had no effect. Like the *PMLA* readers who responded publicly to the Hunter/Morton exchange, readers in this study were divided, one rating the response unsuccessful, the other successful overall.

“MILTON’S CHAOS,” CATHERINE GIMELLI MARTIN (1996)

This article is a primary response to John Rumrich’s “Milton’s God and the Matter of Chaos” (1995). In it, Martin cites approval of Rumrich’s theme, the role of Chaos in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, but makes it clear that she disapproves of his particular theory.

Both readers agreed that the tone of Rumrich’s original article is scholarly and dispassionate, and that this tone is largely echoed by Martin, as illustrated by her first paragraph:

It was with considerable interest that I turned to John Rumrich’s defense of Milton’s indeterminate “power of matter” (to recall William Hunter’s early entry in this ongoing debate) in last October’s *PMLA* (110 [1995]: 1035–46). One cannot but agree that lately there has been a curious silence on the topic of Rumrich’s essay “Milton’s God and the Matter of Chaos,” a contribution that promises to reopen a discussion prematurely foreclosed by Regina Schwartz’s influential treatment of chaos as a region unambiguously “hostile to God.” (468)

However, although Martin’s response does not seem as outwardly aggressive as some of the responses discussed in this chapter, both readers agreed that some of her

verb choices do seem to signal an inappropriate personal focus on Rumrich and his scholarship:

Yet unfortunately this central objection [to Milton's Chaos] is not resolved merely by inverting it, that is, by imagining chaos as simply and universally benign. In this respect Rumrich not only disappoints but in fact seems wholly to misunderstand the primary principle of modern chaos theory: that as a physical force, chaos (the function inherent in the anarchy's allegorical realm) must be dialogically self-divided to be benign, a point that Milton's epic episode elegantly emphasizes in its own distinctively seventeenth-century vocabulary.

For that reason and related ones, I am discouraged to find that vocabulary appropriated by a critic who, with the best will in the world, nevertheless erases much of chaos's "duality" (as R.A. Shoaf would term it) in favor of more currently fashionable, politically correct dualisms. (469)

Notice the use here of multiple verbs implying counter-factive writer's stance:

disappoints, *misunderstand[s]*, and *erases* all seem to imply that Rumrich, though perhaps as Martin puts it *with the best will in the world*, has based his article on incorrect information. Asked if they agreed with this assessment, one reader said yes, the other no, only "that he has willfully distorted chaos theory." And when asked if this assertion is both an exaggeration and difficult to prove (violates Maxim of Quality) given that Rumrich's reading of *Paradise Lost*, like any literary reading, is subjective to a large extent, one reader said yes, the other no.

Finally, readers were asked if they thought Martin's comment that Rumrich has *erase[d]* information to deliberately privilege what is more *currently fashionable* and *politically correct*, uses intense language to imply that he has done so at the loss of what is true. One reader said yes, the other no. Since this reference to Rumrich's scholarly intentions cannot be proved, it can be construed as a violation of the Maxim of Quality inappropriate in this context. Asked if such a reference would constitute a slur against

Rumrich and his principles, thus violating the Maxim of Quality, one reader said yes, the other showed signs of agreement but stated that “*slur* is too strong.”

Partial rationale for an overly personal approach on Martin’s part can be found in a subsequent passage:

A detailed discussion of all my objections to Rumrich’s essay would take at least another of my own—which in fact I have written (*Milton Studies*, 1997), making me a somewhat less than ideally objective appraiser of the one in question. Nevertheless, on its own terms Rumrich’s essay possesses a number of troubling inconsistencies that I feel constrained to point out. . . . Rumrich overlooks approximately three hundred lines of vital debate between Satan and Eve. The result is a reversed though equally monological dualism, in which benign feminine wombs like Chaos and Eve ultimately triumph over masculine tombs like Satan and Death (1042). (469)

As Martin suggests, it is probably a current yet opposite interest and involvement with Rumrich’s particular topic (Chaos in *Paradise Lost*) which seems to put Martin somewhat on the defensive. Both readers agreed with this assessment, one adding that “the problem is that her own essay is too close to his, and she needs to discriminate her take on the issue.”

Also both readers agreed that in defense of her own theories and publications, Martin is perhaps a little too intolerant of her fellow Miltonist. Notice her choice of the counter-factive verb *overlooks*; while Martin’s use of this particular verb implies that Rumrich’s methods were not thorough, his results thus incomplete, there is a large possibility that he did not overlook said lines, but simply chose not to focus on them. After all, this is a reading of a literary work, which as stated before, is necessarily subjective to a great extent. But when asked, then, if such an implication is appropriate in a professional scholarly context, one reader said no, the other yes, since Martin’s implication could point to “relevant material.”

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations, the use of intense negative verbs, and the use of intense language had a limited effect on the success of the response. Related negative elements such as excess ego-involvement had an adverse effect, while positive stylistic elements such as a dispassionate scholarly tone had a positive counter affect.

Both readers found this primary response unsuccessful overall, one reader adding that this is “largely because she [Martin] doesn’t clarify how Rumrich is supposed to be misreading chaos theory” (a violation of the Maxim of Quantity not discussed here). The other found the response unsuccessful because it includes “poisoning act[s]” such as “mentioning her own work published elsewhere.”

“REPLY,” JOHN RUMRICH (1996)

This article is a secondary response to Catherine Gimelli Martin’s “Milton’s Chaos” (1996). In it, Rumrich seems to struggle a little between the calm dispassionate tone of his original article, and the more personally critical, though subtle, tone of Martin’s. All in all, his response seems more successful than Martin’s because of his stress on his willingness to communicate openly and amiably (despite differences) and his dispassionate reiteration and defense of his ideas. For example, his first paragraph is devoted not to analyzing Martin’s negative critique, but to building a bridge to common ground:

Catherine Gimelli Martin and I largely agree on the significance of chaos in *Paradise Lost*, indeed to a greater degree than she registers. Her letter begins with an approving summary of the premises of my argument and proceeds to points of disapproval and disagreement. Yet even in dissent she takes positions that I endorse. (470)

The two readers, however, were divided concerning the greater success of Rumrich's response. One reader agreed fully that Rumrich's response is more successful, while the other disagreed, finding the first paragraph, "an attempt to dismiss her [Martin's] objections [by] asserting there are no real grounds of difference."

Rumrich does seem to shift tone a little in subsequent passages from noting *the greater degree of agree[ment]* to a slightly more intense tone:

Martin complains that my argument imperceptibly shifts from its original emphasis on complex indeterminacy, including indeterminacy of gender, to a "simpler binary" or merely a "benign perspective" on chaos. On the contrary, my essay is centrally concerned with the relation of chaos to the edgy moral order of *Paradise Lost*: "Without the indeterminacy, the potential for otherness, that chaos constitutes, Satan could not tempt humankind or even conceive of success" (1043). (470)

The verb *complains* carries a negative degree of author's behavior interpretation, and it would seem that by simply using the verb *states*, Rumrich could have avoided implying that Martin's behavior is more personal than professional; both readers agreed with this assessment. However, Rumrich does refute Martin solidly and calmly with a quote from his original article, a technique which both readers agreed promotes successful communication. Rumrich continues with this style of refutation throughout his response, as he notes in the following passage:

At least some of Martin's criticisms apparently stem from misreading or curiously selective reading of my essay [sic], prompting me in this reply to quote myself more often than I would like. There may well be points concerning Milton's God and chaos about which we differ; it is difficult to know from Martin's letter. In any case, I have no wish to play the role of precursor in relation to her scholarly efforts, and insofar as we agree, I readily concede that she and I have arrived independently at similar insights concerning the role of chaos in Milton's epic. Yet it disturbs me that Martin distinguishes her work from my own by asserting that mine reflects the form and pressure of political correctness and panders to feminism. I am not sure just what *political correctness* denotes here, but in current rhetorical practice it tends to indicate a substitute for thoughtful analysis and accurate, thorough reading. Much of my

published work over the last several years, most recently *Milton Unbound*, analyzes ways in which professional and political interests and affiliations have skewed interpretation of seventeenth-century texts. My political agenda, such as it is, runs contrary to such distortion. Feminist writings in philosophy, theology, and mythography have unquestionably helped me to perceive in a different light certain customary assumptions of modern Milton scholarship. But I believe that such influence has made my scholarship more rather than less honest. (470)

Note that Rumrich does use some potentially intense terms to characterize Martin's critique (*misreading*, *selective reading*). But he does seem to soften the term *misreading* with a qualification (*apparently*) so that his comments do not come off as accusations. Both readers disagreed with this assessment, though, indicating that the language intensity here is harmful. Rumrich also uses mild verbs to characterize his own criticism (*concede*, *disturbs*). Asked whether they thought that the use of these verbs helps Rumrich maintain the polite tone appropriate in this context, one reader said yes, the other no, pointing out other elements in the passage (e.g. the phrase *it is difficult to know from Martin's letter*) which are meant as "a slap."

In addition, Rumrich seems to try and distance himself from the type of personal struggle Martin seems to introduce in her primary response by stating *I have no wish to play the role of precursor in relation to her scholarly efforts*. Asked if he succeeds in keeping his professional distance, both readers said no, one adding "look at [the phrase] *her scholarly efforts*—they are mere *efforts* not full-fledged scholarship."

Finally, though Rumrich addresses Martin's slur on his intentions—*political correctness . . . tends to indicate a substitute for thoughtful analysis and accurate, thorough reading*—he seems to use his past record of publication (matter-of-factly) to illustrate that Martin's assertion is incorrect. But both readers disagreed with this positive interpretation, one stating, "I read it as narcissism," making Rumrich's

statement concerning past publication a violation of the Maxim of Relation (i.e. Rumrich's personal achievements do not negate Martin's criticisms.)

General Diagnosis: In this case, Maxim violations, the use of intense, negative verbs, and general language intensity had a negative effect on the success of the response, while positive stylistic elements such as solid, calm refutation had a positive effect. Positive stylistic elements such as the use of mild verbs had a limited positive affect, while an attempt to distance from personal involvement had no positive affect.

One reader rated this secondary response unsuccessful overall, noting that "eventually, though in a different way, he [Rumrich] lowers himself to her [Martin's] standard of insulting (preferencing [sic] *his* book to *her* article, e.g.)" The other reader was a little kinder, rating the response "successful up to the last paragraph, where it becomes unsuccessful"; however, this reader also commented that "his [Rumrich's] façade of gentility does not make his response less personal than Martin's. . . . the exchange is pretty personal on both sides."

CHAPTER SEVEN SUMMARY

Given factors concerning general information, publication statistics, and overall response tone, I had divided expectations concerning *PMLA* readers' sensitivity to violations of Grice's Maxims, the use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of generally intense language. On one hand, I expected some readers to be resistant to the concept of successful/unsuccessful and to be less concerned with style. Indeed, one of the readers in this section was one of only two in the entire study to disagree with Altick and Fenstermaker's assertion that "controversial

points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility” (253). This reader commented that,

the direct reference to the Marquis of Queensbury Rules for this sort of fighting suggests what is really being designed here are ways to take what can be rather nasty and make it somehow “civilized.” Fighting is still fighting, however, and the idea that changing styles = changing behaviors is fairly suspect and a bit stuffy, if not hypocritical. Altick’s own piece is a marvel of stylized assumptions and stereotypes. Accurate on a formal level; wholly inadequate to the social exchange being described.

On the other hand, the other three readers, like the PMLA readers who wrote to protest intense response exchanges, either agreed or strongly agree with Altick’s assessment. But in spite of their agreement, these readers still seemed less sensitive overall to violations of Grice’s Maxims, the use of intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and the use of generally intense language than readers in other sections.

Thus overall, Maxim violations had a significant effect on the overall success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs. On the other hand, violations of the Rules of Politeness and the use of intense language had only a limited effect.

More specifically, consider the responses which exhibited Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity: these negative stylistic elements seemed to have an overall limited affect on the success of the response, which is to say that in most of these cases, readers delivered a split verdict, one reader saying successful, the other, unsuccessful (e.g. Schmidgall). And this was true even when there were few positive stylistic elements such as agreeing to disagree; calmly and dispassionately reasserting argument; and reiterating arguments through fresh examples acting as a counter-balance.

Still, cases which did not exhibit Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity were always

rated successful overall (e.g. James) and were fortified with positive stylistic elements such as creating a dispassionate, thorough critique; validating one's critic's goals; and using mild language.

ENDNOTES

1. Actually, the case of the *PMLA* questionnaire was even more complicated than here described. The Editor of *PMLA*, Domna Stanton, forwarded it to the Managing Editor, Judy Goulding, who returned the survey without completing it, stating in a letter that "While we would like to be helpful, many of the questions that you pose are matters of opinion that the staff is not in a position to comment on. I am therefore returning the survey to you. . . I'm sorry not to be of more help, and I do wish you success with your survey."
2. The articles in this set are: "The Other Heading: Memories, Responses, and Responsibilities" (Derrida 1993); "The Accessibility of Derrida" (Swardson 1993); and "Reply [to Swardson]" (Brault and Naas 1993).
3. Other articles in the set include primary responses such as "Shakespeare and Feminist Readings" (Cacicedo 1988) and "Feminist Criticism" (Adelman, et al. 1989); secondary responses such as "Reply [to Cacicedo]" (Levin 1988) and "Reply [to Adelman, et al.]" (Levin 1989); and secondary responses by someone other than the author of the original article such as "Feminist Readings of Shakespeare" (Purdy 1989; Birnbaum 1989).

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR REVISION

CONCLUSIONS

Once again, my goal in undertaking the current study was to attempt to answer the following four questions:

1. What is the exact definition of the scholarly response paper and what are its boundaries as a genre within the academic discourse community?
2. (a) Can scholarly response papers be reasonably termed successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue? (b) If so, by what formal methods or theories can one determine whether or not a scholarly response paper is appropriate or inappropriate, successful or unsuccessful?
3. What factors might cause a scholar to respond unsuccessfully, and how and to what degree does the success or failure of a scholarly response paper affect scholarly credibility?
4. How can the answers to the preceding questions be of use to the writers and potential writers of the scholarly response paper?

I was able to answer Question 1, Question 2a, and Question 3, and had partial success in answering Question 2b, as summarized in the next two sections:

FINDINGS CONCERNING QUESTION ONE, QUESTION 2A, AND QUESTION 3

As in the case of all genres and discourse communities, the scholarly response paper has a particular function and purpose within the English academic discourse community. Although scholarly response papers differ in terms of prototypicality

(length, organization, etc.) and slightly in purpose (primary vs. secondary responses), most members of the discourse community seem to agree that the primary purpose of the response is to promote the scholarly exchange of information.

Also, respondents must adhere to a certain register and certain terms of appropriateness in order to construct a successful scholarly response paper, one which fulfills its purpose. To do so, almost three-quarters of readers and editors recommend avoiding (a) statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face; over three-quarters recommend avoiding (b) accusations which cannot be proved or supported; over one-half recommend avoiding (c) verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious; over three-quarters recommend avoiding (d) language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context and which is thus potentially harmful to the response; and over three-quarters recommend avoiding (e) disproportionate language intensity.

Furthermore, all of the 17 readers and editors who participated in the current study believed that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful or unsuccessful according whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue and that the success or non-success of such dialogue can be affected by the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense.

Still, constructing a response which employs constructive criticisms, and balancing personal and professional goals in order to do so, is not always an easy task.

Respondents must not only navigate the pressures of external and internal argument cultures, but must also manage face and identity concerns (e.g. the need to protect status and intellect) as well. Respondents who do not manage these concerns well, producing unsuccessful scholarly response papers, may in turn lose professional credibility (all readers and editors thought this was the case) which may adversely affect future publication (over half of readers and editors thought this was the case); job promotion (over one-third of readers and editors thought this was the case); and, most importantly, peer standing (over three-quarters of readers and editors thought this was the case).

FINDINGS CONCERNING QUESTION 2B

In order to answer Question 2b, I first explored the following theories/rules/studies:

- The Co-Operative Principle and the Conversational Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner
- Studies of semantic (denotative and evaluative) verb force
- Lakoff's Rules of Politeness
- Studies of language intensity

Finding that these had been shown useful in determining the success of a sample response paper (e.g. Harris 1992), I was able to form the following four hypotheses in regard to the larger sample of response papers taken from five different journals and analyzed in Chapters Three-Seven:

1. Maxim violations, particularly numerous maxim violations, indicate an unsuccessful response.
2. Verbs which imply negative author's stance (*attack*); counter-factive writer's stance (*misuse*); author's behavior interpretation (*criticize*); attitudinal verbs

of arguing (*deny*); cognition (*do not realize*); and reaction (*convince*); often signal a focus on researchers, not research, and thus are often too intense for this context. Their extensive use, then, may render a response unsuccessful.

3. Terms which violate the Rules of Politeness within the context of a scholarly response paper are inappropriate and may produce negative results, particularly in regard to a respondent's credibility.
4. Highly intense language, particularly when used excessively and in disproportion to preceding articles, will have a negative impact on both the scholar's credibility and the success of the response.

Findings in terms of individual journal were as follows:

Applied Linguistics

Overall, Maxim violations and violations of the Rules of Politeness seemed to have the most significant affect on the success of the response, while the use of intense negative verbs and general language intensity had less power to render the response unsuccessful. Still, responses which had a greater number of maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense terms (e.g. Sheen) tended to be regarded as more unsuccessful, while those which avoided these elements, either to a large degree or entirely, tended to be regarded as more successful (e.g. Bialystok). These more successful responses also tended to employ a more positive set of stylistic elements such as calmly and thoroughly organizing criticisms and providing background for criticism; finding points of agreement; and showing sincere professional interest both in the topic and the professional purpose of the response exchange.

Early American Literature

Overall, Maxim violations seemed to have the most significant negative affect on the overall success of the response. The use of intense negative verbs had a less adverse affect. Finally, violations of the Rules of the Politeness and the use of intense language seemed to have a significant negative affect, but because such violations and such language appeared infrequently in the *EAL* responses, it is difficult to draw a strong conclusion regarding their potential negative affects on a larger scale.

Still, numerous Maxim violations, intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense language did *not* always seem to be a factor in the overall success of the response; both the Pitcher and the Dowling responses exhibited examples of several of these, and the former was considered successful, the latter unsuccessful. What seemed to be the deciding factor in these cases was a tonal difference, more calm and conversational in the case of Pitcher, more biting in the case of Dowling.

However, the Bauer response, which exhibited an extremely limited instance of intense negative verbs and general language intensity with an overwhelming amount of positive stylistic elements such as apologizing for error and respect and deference for the critic, was clearly most successful. So while it is difficult at this stage to argue that Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and generally intense language have the power in and of themselves to render an *EAL* response unsuccessful, it does seem safe to conclude that they do not have this power as long as they are well-balanced by positive stylistic elements.

Journal of Technical Writing and Communication

Overall, Maxim violations had a significant negative effect on the success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and general language intensity. Yet a response which exhibited several examples of these (e.g. Connors) was found successful overall by at least one reader due to certain “cogent” points.

Still, responses with a high number of maxim violations, intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and general language intensity (e.g. Harris) tended to be considered unsuccessful, while those which avoided these elements, either to a large degree or entirely (e.g. Allen), were most successful. Successful responses also tended to employ a more positive set of stylistic elements such as beginning the critique with a general agreement; using examples and citations from the text being critiqued; making clear distinctions in terms; and avoiding singling out critics by name.

College Composition and Communication

Overall, Maxim violations had the most significant effect on the overall success of the response, while intense, negative verbs and general language intensity had a more limited effect. And the few violations of the Rules of Politeness seemed to have no adverse affect on the overall success of the response. Also, ego-involvement, or the reader’s agreement/disagreement with the respondent’s views, proved to be a stronger mitigating factor than I would have expected in a discourse community which seems to stress an open sense of shared community.

More specifically, consider the responses which exhibited Maxim violations, intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language

intensity: these negative stylistic elements seemed to have an overall limited affect on the success of the response, which is to say that in most of these cases, readers delivered a split verdict, one reader saying successful, the other, unsuccessful (e.g. Faigley). Perhaps this is because in many of these cases a number of positive stylistic elements such as showing sincere scholarly interest by offering alternate solutions; showing respect for one's critic; thanking one's critic for feedback; and citing outside sources provided an effective counter-balance. And as aforesaid, ego-involvement seemed to counter-act negative stylistic elements in some cases (e.g. Charney).

Still, cases which did not exhibit Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity were almost always rated successful overall (e.g. Wolff). In the responses, where this was not the case (i.e. a split verdict as in Hairston), ego-involvement again seemed to be the primary mitigating factor.

Publications of the Modern Language Association

Overall, Maxim violations had a significant affect on the overall success of the response, as did the use of intense, negative verbs. On the other hand, violations of the Rules of Politeness and the use of intense language had only a limited affect.

More specifically, consider the responses which exhibited Maxim violations, intense, negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity: these negative stylistic elements seemed to have an overall limited affect on the success of the response, which is to say that in most of these cases, readers delivered a split verdict, one reader saying successful, the other, unsuccessful (e.g. Schmidgall). And this was true even when there were few positive stylistic elements such as agreeing

to disagree; calmly and dispassionately reasserting argument; and reiterating arguments through fresh examples acting as a counter-balance.

Still, cases which did not exhibit Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity were always rated successful overall (e.g. James) and were fortified with positive stylistic elements such as creating a dispassionate, thorough critique; validating one's critic's goals; and using mild language.

Overall Findings

In sum, of the four hypotheses, only one—Hypothesis 2 concerning the use of intense negative verbs—proved true in all cases, and this due to its greater flexibility (i.e. *their extensive use may render a response unsuccessful*). Thus while Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and intense language *often* had a negative effect on the success of the response, they did not *always* have such an affect and thus cannot be expected to predict the overall success of the response in all cases. Table 9.1 shows the extent of their affect on response success in the five journals:

Table 9.1

Theories/Rules/Studies	Most Significant Effect	Less Significant Effect	No Effect
Maxim Violations	<i>AL, EAL, JTW, CCC, PMLA</i>		
Intense, Negative Verbs	<i>JTW, PMLA</i>	<i>AL, EAL, CCC</i>	
Violations of Rules of Politeness	<i>AL, EAL, JTW</i>	<i>PMLA</i>	<i>CCC</i>
High Language Intensity	<i>EAL, JTW</i>	<i>AL, CCC, PMLA</i>	

MITIGATING FACTORS

While the findings in the preceding section are useful, they cannot be accepted as absolute before considering the following mitigating factors, some of which were unanticipated in beginning this study:

1. **Sample Size;** a larger, more thorough analysis involving more feedback from scholarly readers is key in determining the overall validity of these findings, especially in order to find whether the viewpoints of the two “resisting” readers in this study should be given greater or lesser credence. A larger sample involving more readers would also assure that findings were not skewed by more arbitrary factors such as the inability to comment objectively due to overwhelming ego-involvement.
2. **Positive Stylistic Elements;** these elements seem to act as a counter-balance in many cases, and thus it may be impossible to weigh the affects of the theories/rules/studies proposed in this study without simultaneously taking these into account.
3. **Tone;** a calmer, more positive tone also seems to counter-act the affects of negative stylistic elements, and thus may need to be considered in the same way as positive stylistic elements. In a similar way, negative tone in a primary response may help to shape an unsuccessful secondary response, and this fact needs to be better addressed as well.
4. **Valid content;** in some cases making valid points, fulfilling the most essential purpose of the response paper, seemed to out-weigh the affects of negative stylistic elements.

STRATEGIES FOR REVISION

Although this study *did not* conclude that Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness, and high language intensity were always indicative of an unsuccessful, or somewhat unsuccessful scholarly response paper, it did show that responses which fulfilled the purpose of the response and which did not exhibit Maxim violations, intense negative verbs, violations of the Rules of Politeness and/or general language intensity were nearly always rated successful overall. Moreover, these responses were always fortified with positive stylistic elements.

In turn, this would seem to imply that scholars are more likely to produce a successful response paper, if they first make sure that their reasons for responding align with the purpose of the response; in short, that both intention and purpose are valid. As the authors of "Detection, Diagnosis, and the Strategies of Revision" (1986) state:

Intentions take many forms. In a cognitive sense, intentions are one's goals and plans for the current text as well as the criteria and models for texts in general that one brings to the task. (Flower, et al. 28)

Problems may result, then, if respondents' goals (conscious or unconscious) include "getting back at" scholars who have criticized their work or even argued against the importance of their pet theories; in other words, if respondents become too personally involved in the criticism.

Obviously, writers of scholarly responses need some sort of strategy in order to guard against the public display of such personal involvement while at the same time producing a successful response. One part of such a strategy would, of course, involve avoiding Maxim violations and violations of the Rules of Politeness; keeping potentially negative verbs and intense language to a minimum; and balancing any

negative criticism with positive stylistic elements like the ones discussed in preceding sections. Also, Parker and Riley (*Writing for Academic Publication* 1995) outline three basic objectives which should help scholars “keep to the path” in realizing these goals:

1. First, since the author of the response cannot assume that readers will have read the original article, some summary of the original argument needs to be provided.
2. Second, the author of the response should acknowledge any positive aspects of the original article or points the author agrees with. After all, if you’re going to criticize an article, you should have the self-confidence to give credit where it is due.
3. Third, the response should identify those points which the writer believes have a better (or at least an alternative) explanation or which need more expansion. Then the author of the response provides his or her own contribution. (66)

None of this is to say that scholars should not criticize, disagree, or advance alternate opinions or findings, because all of these actions are part of productive and necessary scholarly activity. The point is, as Tannen states, “to distinguish constructive ways of doing so from nonconstructive ones” (272). After all, even when given constructively, criticism is only part of critical thinking, other parts involve further inquiry, “looking for new insights, new perspectives, new knowledge” (273). Put simply, it is difficult for such inquiry to take place successfully when for one reason or another, scholars behave like defense attorneys.

However, there is no reason why academia cannot either reform the currently accepted or tolerated modes of argument, or in some cases, advance new, more productive ones. And because there is clear and increasingly vocal support for this kind of change perhaps now, at the turn of the century, is a good time to begin a major transition in this area. Especially since scholars, too, seem increasingly vocal about making communicative changes of all kinds (see Elizabeth Rankin's vote to revamp the "hollow and mechanical" construct known as the literature review in the academic research article ["Changing the Hollow Conventions of Academic Writing" 1998; A64]). For example, we can strive to conduct our critical interchanges and exchanges, such as those which take place in the scholarly response paper, with greater respect. Greater respect, would not limit the possibilities of discussion, but would most likely expand these, as Lefkowitz explains:

If we display respect, we will be less likely to make assumptions about our colleagues' motives. Rather, we will concentrate on the substance of their argument. If their argument is bad . . . eventually someone—even other academics—will be sure to notice it. If we allow several points of view to be presented, and listen respectfully to all of them, then all listeners will at least have the power to make educated decisions. (A64)

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE EDITOR QUESTIONNAIRE WITH RESPONSES (*APPLIED LINGUISTICS*)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Journal: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

May I use your name in connection with your responses if necessary? **YES / NO**

Signature _____ Date _____

KEY TERMS

1. **Scholarly response paper** refers to either:

- a. Criticism published in response to an original article, or
- b. A response by the author of an original article to the published criticism of that article.

For example, in *Applied Linguistics*, Carol A. Chapelle's "Disembedding 'Disembedded Figures in the Landscape'" (13.4; 1992) would be a **primary response** to Roger Griffiths and Ronald Sheen's original research article "Disembedded Figures in the Landscape" (13.2; 1992). Thus Ronald Sheen's response to Chapelle's primary SRP entitled "A Rebuttal to Chapelle's Response to Griffiths and Sheen" (14.1; 1993) would be a **secondary response**.

2. A **response set** consists, at minimum, of one original article and at least one primary response. However, sets sometimes contain more than one primary response and one or more secondary responses.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING RESPONSE SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION

Please circle the letters of any responses which apply.

1. My research shows that *Applied Linguistics* does not print scholarly response papers regularly, or even frequently (only six sets published in the 1986-1996 period). Is this because:
 - a. Very few responses are submitted?
 - b. Not all responses submitted are appropriate for publication?
 - c. Lack of space for response publication?
 - d. Other (please be specific)?

RESPONSE: Other; our policy has been to publish as many quality original research papers in a given volume (four issues) as possible. We are thus not set up to handle regular response pieces.

2. In the six response sets published in *Applied Linguistics* between 1986-1996, only one contained a **secondary response paper**. Do you think this is because:
 - a. Authors in this field generally dislike the personal confrontation which sometimes results from public criticism.
 - b. Authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary.
 - c. It is more difficult for a secondary response writer than for a primary response writer to respond for professional, not personal, reasons.
 - d. Other (please be specific).

RESPONSE: Authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary.

3. Do you require respondents to meet any general criteria regarding form, style, content, etc.? For example, do you require respondents to:
 - a. Include in their responses a general abstract, outline, or summary of the article or primary response to which they are responding?
 - b. Meet a certain page limit?
 - c. Prove the necessity of publishing a response (i.e. explain their rationale)?

- d. Respond within a certain time period (e.g. within two years of the original article's publication)?
- e. Include their names?
- f. Other (please be specific)?

RESPONSE: Meet a certain page limit; prove the necessity of publishing a response (i.e. explain their rationale); and include their names.

- 4. Do you prefer to publish planned or spontaneous scholarly response papers? That is, do you prefer to:
 - a. Solicit responses as part of controlled debate for a given issue, or
 - b. Publish unsolicited and perhaps unanticipated responses?

RESPONSE: We have done both, depending on the original paper.

- 5. When you publish unsolicited response papers, do you inform the writers of the articles involved? **YES / NO** If so, do you do this by:
 - a. Telephone?
 - b. Letter?
 - c. E-mail?
 - d. FAX?
 - e. Other?

RESPONSE: Yes, by e-mail.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING RESPONSE STYLE AND CONTENT

Please circle the letter of any responses which apply.

- 1. It is generally accepted that among scholars of various fields and academic discourse communities, there are rules (sometimes unstated) which govern scholarly responses to criticism. Statements made by Richard D. Altick and John J. Fenstermaker (1993) in chapter eight of *The Art of Literary Research*, "The Scholar's Life," illustrate this point:

Our profession has no room for intemperate criticism of any kind, least of all in print. Differences of opinion there will always be, and scholarly competence not being a gift distributed equally among all practitioners, lapses of judgement and

imperfections of knowledge will sometimes call for comment. . . . But the necessary process of debate and correction can, and should, be conducted with dignity and courtesy. Name-calling, personalities, aspersions on one's professional ability, and similar below-the-belt tactics are not to be condoned. Controversial points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility. (253)

What are you feelings on this topic? Do you agree that writers of scholarly response papers should take these words to heart? (Circle only one response here.)

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please explain briefly the rationale behind your position.

RESPONSE: Strongly agree. I think the rationale is clear; the goal of debate has to be progress and clarity of understanding and not winning, losing, and saving face.

2. Do you agree that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information? **YES / NO** Do you believe that any of the following elements threaten this goal and should be avoided?:
- a. Statements relevant to the case **ONLY** in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
 - b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
 - c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort*, *attack*).
 - d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
 - e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").

RESPONSE: Yes; all of the above.

3. Are there any scholarly response papers you have refused to print because of:
- a. Language that could be construed as inappropriate, insulting, or overly intense?
 - b. Lack of organization, purpose, or focus?
 - c. Other (please be specific)?
 - d. No; none of the above.

RESPONSE: Language that could be construed as inappropriate, insulting, or overly intense.

4. If you have refused to print a scholarly response paper, did you offer to do so after the respondent made necessary changes? YES / NO

RESPONSE: Yes.

5. Please read the following passages taken from a secondary scholarly response paper where one scholar, Brown, is responding to a primary scholarly response paper by Ferguson and Parker. In spite of Brown's implications, assume that Ferguson and Parker's primary response was a professional alternate view of the information presented in Brown's original article:

Ferguson and Parker's recent *attack* [1] on an earlier paper of mine [2] calls for a few brief comments, although I'm very surprised that I had to wait for its publication to see their criticisms. *Scholarly courtesy* should have led them, minimally, to send me a preprint. *Discourtesy*, however, is the least of their *scholarly transgressions*. In their search for *Bogey Man* against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme, they completely distort my original paper.

There are a good many *manglings* of my views and arguments in their paper by way of *selective quotation* and *misrepresentative rephrasing* which would be tedious to detail here, but anyone interested in the rhetoric of excision and paraphrase can find a number of interesting negative examples by mapping their quotations and representations against the original text. Of particular interest is the catalog of jargon terms with which they *indict* my supposedly obscure presentation [1, p. 359], all of which are much less formidable in context than in Ferguson and Parker's quarantine of them. The referees of [journal], in any case, found my discussion clear enough for their audience, and I have had many subsequent *compliments* from technical communicators on the lucidity with which I present some highly complex issues. The paper also won, to my very great pleasure, the *distinguished Jay Gould Award* for Excellence in Technical Communication. . . .

I have strong reservations about the scheme Ferguson and Parker offer—in particular, that it is only a set of statements to be memorized, not a set of principles to be learned; in short, that it is not linguistics. But I will leave it to readers of both articles to decide what might be useful to them in each, and leave the *mean-spirited, school-yardish, my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* to Ferguson and Parker. (emphasis added)

6. In general, do you believe that this scholarly response paper
- Promotes the scholarly exchange of information,
 - Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face, or
 - Does both of these?

RESPONSE: Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face.

7. Do you think that Brown's mention of compliments and awards is relevant to the scholarly exchange of information? In other words, does the compliment of one reader negate the criticism of another? **YES / NO**

RESPONSE: No.

8. Do you think that an unfounded accusation such as *In their search for a Bogey Man against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme, they completely distort my original paper* is appropriate in this context? **YES / NO**

RESPONSE: No.

9. Do you think that verbs such as *attack, distort, and indict* are appropriate in this context given that they imply a negative intent which seems unlikely or cannot be proved? **YES / NO**

RESPONSE: No.

10. Do you believe that terms such as *mean-spirited, school-yardish, and my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* are appropriate in a scholarly context? **YES / NO**

RESPONSE: No.

11. Do you believe that highly emotional, accusatory terms such as *manglings, selective quotation, and misrepresentative rephrasing* represent inappropriate language intensity? **YES / NO**

RESPONSE: Yes.

12. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful and appropriate or unsuccessful and inappropriate according to the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense? **YES / NO**

RESPONSE: Yes.

13. If you answered **YES** to Question 12, would you say, in general, that Brown's response is:

- a. Successful and appropriate, or
- b. Unsuccessful and inappropriate?

RESPONSE: Unsuccessful and inappropriate.

14. If you answered **YES** to question 12, do you believe that an inappropriate scholarly response paper can *to some degree* affect a scholar's credibility? **YES / NO** If so, does this lack of credibility have the *potential* to affect that scholar's (circle all that apply):

- a. Future publication
- b. Job promotion
- c. Peer standing

RESPONSE: Yes; future publication and peer standing.

Additional comments concerning scholarly response papers and their publication in *Applied Linguistics*: None.

APPENDIX B: COMBINED RESPONSES TO EDITOR QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONS CONCERNING SRP SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION

1. My research shows that *AL* and *EAL* do not print scholarly response papers regularly, or even frequently. Is this because:
 - a. Very few responses are submitted?
 - b. Not all responses submitted are appropriate for publication?
 - c. Lack of space for response publication?
 - d. Other (please be specific)?

Table B.1

<i>AL</i>	Other; our policy has been to publish as many quality original research papers in a given volume (four issues) as possible. We are thus not set up to handle regular response pieces.
<i>EAL</i>	Very few responses are submitted.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.

2. My research shows that both *CCC* and *PMLA* print responses fairly regularly and frequently in the "Interchanges" and "Forum" sections of the journals (32 sets and 94 sets published respectively in the 1986-1996 period). This is in contrast to some of the journals of other branches of "English" studies (*AL*, six sets; *EAL*, two sets). Why do you think scholarly responses are so much more common in *CCC* and *PMLA*?
 - a. Authors in this field are especially fond of public debate.
 - b. Authors in this field consider public debate a necessary part of the scholarly exchange of information and feel duty-bound to respond
 - c. Authors in this field are particularly dedicated and territorial and tend to respond to protect their "turf."
 - d. *CCC* and *PMLA* simply have a larger readership than many other journals.
 - e. Other (please be specific).

Table B.2

<i>CCC</i>	I'm a little cautious about guessing at the motives of psychology of "authors in the field," and I didn't know until now that the SRP is a more salient feature of discourse in comp than in other fields. I'd be interested to see if there are any patterns in the kinds of <i>CCC</i> articles that seem to draw responses.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

3. Why do you think very few **primary responses** are submitted?

Table B.3

<i>AL</i>	N/A
<i>EAL</i>	Authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary. Also, scholars in the field are relatively few in number. And the field is not bitterly contested as is scholarship in other areas of inquiry.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.

4. In the six response sets published in *AL* and in the two response sets published in *EAL* between 1986-1996, only one and one respectively contained **secondary responses**. Do you think this is because:

- a. Authors in this field generally dislike the personal confrontation which sometimes results from public criticism.
- b. Authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary.
- c. It is more difficult for a secondary response writer than for a primary response writer to respond for professional, not personal, reasons.
- d. Other (please be specific).

Table B.4

<i>AL</i>	Authors in this field tend to avoid possible confrontation unless absolutely necessary.
<i>EAL</i>	Don't wish to generalize.

5. Most of the responses published in *CCC* and *PMLA* between 1986-1996 included secondary responses. Again, this is in contrast to other journals in English studies. Do you think this is because:
- Authors in this field generally feel it necessary to respond to public criticism for personal reasons, such as a defense of character.
 - Authors in this field generally feel it necessary to respond to public criticism for professional reasons, such as a responsibility to “get the facts straight.”
 - Authors in this field sometimes tend to be confrontational in their dedication to their research.
 - Other (please be specific).

Table B.5

<i>CCC</i>	I always thought it was standard editorial practice to invite authors to respond to printed comments on their work.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

6. Do you require respondents to meet any general criteria regarding form style, content, etc.? For example, do you require respondents to:
- Include in their responses a general abstract, outline, or summary of the article or primary response to which they are responding?
 - Meet a certain page limit?
 - Prove the necessity of publishing a response (i.e. explain their rationale)?
 - Respond within a certain time period (e.g. within two years of the original article’s publication)?
 - Include their names?
 - Other (please be specific)?

Table B.6

<i>AL</i>	Meet a certain page limit; prove the necessity of publishing a response (i.e. explain their rationale); and include their names.
<i>EAL</i>	Meet a certain page limit; we also ask that they be brief and to the point.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	Responses should be brief (2-5 pgs., usually), pointed, in clear dialogue with the article they're responding to (i.e. not a pretext for a mini-article), and timely (within one year of the original). Responses are almost always signed.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

7. Do you prefer to publish planned or spontaneous responses? That is, do you prefer to:

- a. Solicit responses as part of controlled debate for a given issue, or
- b. Publish unsolicited and perhaps unanticipated responses?

Table B.7

<i>AL</i>	We have done both, depending on the original paper.
<i>EAL</i>	There are few, so I don't wish to generalize. We have a forum called "The Round Table" which fulfills some of the purposes of a response (i.e. it allows scholars to speak to issues which are important to them in a form other than the formal essay.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	I do both.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

8. When you publish unsolicited responses, do you inform the writers of the articles involved? If so, do you do this by:

- a. Telephone?
- b. Letter?
- c. E-mail?
- d. FAX?
- e. Other?

Table B.8

AL	Yes; by e-mail.
EAL	Yes; by letter.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Yes; by a letter which invites them to respond.
PMLA	No response.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING RESPONSE STYLE AND CONTENT

9. It is generally accepted that among scholars of various fields and academic discourse communities, there are rules (sometimes unstated) which govern scholarly responses to criticism. Statements made by Richard D. Altick and John J. Fenstermaker (1993) in chapter eight of *The Art of Literary Research*, "The Scholar's Life," illustrate this point:

Our profession has no room for intemperate criticism of any kind, least of all in print. Differences of opinion there will always be, and scholarly competence not being a gift distributed equally among all practitioners, lapses of judgement and imperfections of knowledge will sometimes call for comment. . . . But the necessary process of debate and correction can, and should, be conducted with dignity and courtesy. Name-calling, personalities, aspersions on one's professional ability, and similar below-the-belt tactics are not to be condoned. Controversial points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility. (253)

What are your feelings on this topic? Do you agree that writers of scholarly response papers should take these words to heart? Please explain briefly the rationale behind your position.

Table B.9

AL	Strongly agree. I think the rationale is clear; the goal of debate has to be progress and clarity of understanding and not winning, losing, and saving face.
EAL	Strongly agree. Nothing to explain—the authors have it right.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Agree. Who would argue with an ideal of civility? But if such an ideal were easy to achieve, would it need such sententious and solemn statement by Altick?
PMLA	No response.

10. Do you agree that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information? Do you believe that any of the following elements threaten this goal and should be avoided?
- Statements relevant to the case ONLY in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
 - Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
 - Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort*, *attack*).
 - Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
 - Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").

Table B.10

<i>AL</i>	Yes; all of the above.
<i>EAL</i>	Yes; all of the above.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	Yes; Avoided by whom? Writers? Editors? You verge on legislating style here.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

11. Are there any responses you have refused to print because of:
- Language that could be construed as inappropriate, insulting, or overly intense?
 - Lack of organization, purpose, or focus?
 - Other?
 - No; none of the above.

Table B.11

AL	Language that could be construed as inappropriate, insulting, or overly intense.
EAL	No; none of the above.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	I have <i>declined</i> several because they lacked timeliness and/or interest/pointedness.
PMLA	No response.

12. If you have refused to print a scholarly response paper, did you offer to do so after the respondent made necessary changes?

Table B.12

AL	Yes.
EAL	N/A
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Yes; I have published revised responses.
PMLA	No response.

13. Please read the following passages taken from a secondary scholarly response paper where one scholar, Brown, is responding to a primary scholarly response paper by Ferguson and Parker. In spite of Brown's implications, assume that Ferguson and Parker's response is simply a dispassionate, professional alternate view of the information presented in Brown's original article:

Ferguson and Parker's recent *attack* [1] on an earlier paper of mine [2] calls for a few brief comments, although I'm very surprised that I had to wait for its publication to see their criticisms. *Scholarly courtesy* should have led them, minimally, to send me a preprint. *Discourtesy*, however, is the least of their *scholarly transgressions*. In their search for *Bogey Man* against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme, they completely *distort* my original paper.

There are a good many *manglings* of my views and arguments in their paper by way of *selective quotation* and *misrepresentative rephrasing* which would be tedious to detail here, but anyone interested in the rhetoric of excision and paraphrase can find a number of interesting negative examples by mapping their quotations and representations against the original text. Of particular interest is the catalog of jargon terms with which they *indict* my supposedly obscure presentation [1, p. 359], all of which are much less formidable in context than in Ferguson and Parker's quarantine of them. The referees of [journal], in any case, found my discussion clear enough for their audience, and I have had many

subsequent *compliments* from technical communicators on the lucidity with which I present some highly complex issues. The paper also won, to my very great pleasure, the *distinguished Jay Gould Award* for Excellence in Technical Communication. . . .

I have strong reservations about the scheme Ferguson and Parker offer—in particular, that it is only a set of statements to be memorized, not a set of principles to be learned; in short, that it is not linguistics. But I will leave it to readers of both articles to decide what might be useful to them in each, and leave the *mean-spirited, school-yardish, my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach argumentation* to Ferguson and Parker. (emphasis added)

In general, do you believe that this scholarly response paper

- a. promotes the scholarly exchange of information,
- b. Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face, or
- c. Does both of these?

Table B.13

AL	Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face.
EAL	Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Reflects Brown's personal desire to save face.
PMLA	No response.

14. Do you think that Brown's mention of compliments and awards is relevant to the scholarly exchange of information? In other words, does the compliment of one reader negate the criticism of another?

Table B.14

AL	No.
EAL	No.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	No.
PMLA	No response.

15. Do you think that an unfounded accusation such as *In their search for a Bogey Man against which to highlight the virtues of their own 'linguistic' scheme, they completely distort my original paper* is appropriate in this context?

Table B.15

<i>AL</i>	No.
<i>EAL</i>	No.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	No.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

16. Do you think that verbs such as *attack*, *distort*, and *indict* are appropriate in this context given that they imply a negative intent which seems unlikely or cannot be proved?

Table B.16

<i>AL</i>	No.
<i>EAL</i>	No.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	No.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

17. Do you believe that terms such as *mean-spirited*, *school-yardish*, and *my-approach-can-beat-up-your-approach* argumentation are appropriate in a scholarly context?

Table B.17

<i>AL</i>	No.
<i>EAL</i>	No.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	No.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

18. Do you believe that highly emotional, accusatory terms such as *manglings*, *selective quotation*, and *misrepresentative rephrasing* represent inappropriate language intensity?

Table B.18

AL	Yes.
EAL	Yes.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Not sure how a term like “selective quotation” is “highly emotional.”
PMLA	No response.

19. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful and appropriate or unsuccessful and inappropriate according to the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense?

Table B.19

AL	Yes.
EAL	Yes.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Not sure how to answer: “purpose” and “relevance” seem key in judging responses; the others seem minor, stylistic issues.
PMLA	No response.

20. If you answered **YES** to Question 12, would you say, in general, that Brown’s response is:

- a. Successful and appropriate, or
- b. Unsuccessful and inappropriate?

Table B.20

AL	Unsuccessful and inappropriate.
EAL	Unsuccessful and inappropriate.
JTWC	No response.
CCC	Unsuccessful and inappropriate.
PMLA	No response.

21. If you answered **YES** to question 12, do you believe that an inappropriate scholarly response paper can *to some degree* affect a scholar’s credibility? **YES / NO** If so, does this lack of credibility have the *potential* to affect that scholar’s (circle all that apply):

- a. Future publication
- b. Job promotion
- c. Peer standing

Table B.21

<i>AL</i>	Future publication; peer standing.
<i>EAL</i>	Peer standing.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	Yes; only if published. I'd refuse Brown's piece above.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

Additional Comments concerning responses and their publication in your journal:

Table B.22

<i>AL</i>	None.
<i>EAL</i>	None.
<i>JTWC</i>	No response.
<i>CCC</i>	On one occasion, I published responses by two scholars who felt maligned by a particular review and who pretty much demanded the right to respond to it in print. I felt that exchange reflected poorly on everyone involved. With that one exception, however, I'd say that most recent responses in <i>CCC</i> lack the <i>ad hominem</i> quality you seem to be concerned with here, and are instead better characterized as attempts to extend, test, or qualify the <i>intellectual positions</i> put forward by authors in the journal. But I haven't made anything like a systematic survey, and perhaps yours will show otherwise.
<i>PMLA</i>	No response.

APPENDIX C: TALLY OF *GENERAL* EDITOR RESPONSES

Numbers here reflect the responses of the three editors who completed questionnaires for this study.

1. It is generally accepted that among scholars of various fields and academic discourse communities, there are rules (sometimes unstated) which govern scholarly responses to criticism. Statements made by Richard D. Altick and John J. Fenstermaker (1993) in chapter eight of *The Art of Literary Research*, "The Scholar's Life," illustrate this point:

Our profession has no room for intemperate criticism of any kind, least of all in print. Differences of opinion there will always be, and scholarly competence not being a gift distributed equally among all practitioners, lapses of judgement and imperfections of knowledge will sometimes call for comment. . . . But the necessary process of debate and correction can, and should, be conducted with dignity and courtesy. Name-calling, personalities, aspersions on one's professional ability, and similar below-the-belt tactics are not to be condoned. Controversial points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility. (253)

What are your feelings on this topic? Do you agree that writers of scholarly response papers should take these words to heart? Please explain briefly the rationale behind your position.

Table C.1

Strongly agree	2
Agree	1
Not sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

2. Do you agree that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information? **YES / NO**

Table C.2

Yes	3
No	0

3. Do you believe that any of the following elements threaten this goal and should be avoided?

- a. Statements relevant to the case **ONLY** in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort*, *attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").

Table C.3

a	2
b	2
c	2
d	2
e	2

4. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful and appropriate or unsuccessful and inappropriate according to the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense? **YES / NO**

Table C.4

Yes	3
No	0

5. If you answered **YES** to question 12, do you believe that an inappropriate scholarly response paper can *to some degree* affect a scholar's credibility? **YES / NO**

Table C.5

Yes	3
No	0

6. If so, does this lack of credibility have the *potential* to affect that scholar's (circle all that apply):

- a. Future publication
- b. Job promotion
- c. Peer standing

Table C.6

a	1
b	0
c	2

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE READER QUESTIONNAIRE WITH *SPECIFIC* RESPONSES (*APPLIED LINGUISTICS*)

Title: “‘I Bet He Drinks Carling Black Label’: A Riposte to Owen on Corpus Grammar”

Authors: Gill Francis and John Sinclair

Type: Primary Response

1. Consider the following passage:

Owen’s specific attack on CCEG is based on two kinds of argument, both very weak. First, he sets up his own criteria for the usefulness of the lists of class members, and then discovers—surprise, surprise—that CCEG does not do well on these criteria. (191)

Francis and Sinclair characterize Owen’s *critique* as an *attack*, his arguments as *weak*. Both terms characterize Owen as on the one hand, too intellectually aggressive, and on the other, too passive. In your opinion, is this appropriate language intensity? YES / NO

Table D.1

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	No; see comments on paper. I’d leave out <i>very</i> — <i>weak</i> seems okay.

Do you think that the sarcastic interjection, *surprise, surprise*, is too intense for a professional scholarly context? YES / NO

Table D.1.2

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

2. Consider the following passage:

He [Owen] chides us for being vague about numbers (“What is ‘small’?”, “What is ‘most frequent’?”) as if wishing us to follow conventions of scientific reporting which would not be appropriate in a pedagogical grammar. We could have filled the book with numbers, but tried hard not to. Final decisions were made by human beings exercising their judgement. Owen discovers this in triumph, as if he had caught us cheating. (194)

Do you think that verbs like *chides* and *discovers* (*in triumph*) imply that Owen is basically behaving in a less than scholarly way? That perhaps he is being petty, condescending, etc.? **YES / NO**

Table D.2

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	I think the offensive phrase here is <i>as if he had caught us cheating</i> . The others are okay (although <i>chides us</i> may be a bit bad as <i>in triumph</i> ; but <i>chides</i> implies dishonesty).

Is this an appropriate implication, especially since what Owen actually says is:

The ‘Guide to the Use of the Grammar’ (pp. xv-xvii) says: ‘If the word class is small, then all members of it are given. If it is large, then the most frequently used members are given.’ That may seem rational, but from the view of the user, it is impossible to tell whether any particular list is supposed to be exhaustive or not. What is ‘small’? What is most ‘frequent’? The exclusion principle cannot work unless the user is fairly confident of near-exhaustiveness. (180)

Table D.2.2

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	No.

Given the fact that Owen appears neither chiding nor particularly triumphant in the preceding passage, does it seem, or is it probable, that Francis and Sinclair employ these verbs in an attempt to save face? That they are driven by a personal need to protect their “pet” arguments? **YES / NO**

Table D.2.3

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Maybe; this is part of the essence of scholarly communication.

3. Would you agree that while Francis and Sinclair end on an appropriate note, a thank-you stressing the importance of the scholarly exchange of information that the response stands for, it is hard to accept their sincerity completely due to the *retaliatory instincts* (200) expressed through inappropriate language intensity, inappropriate verb force, etc.? **YES / NO**

Table D.3

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes. [calls the phrase <i>retaliatory instincts</i> “ugly”]

4. Overall, would you rate this SRP as:

- a. very successful
- b. successful
- c. unsuccessful
- d. very unsuccessful

Table D.4

Name	Response
Parker	Between successful and unsuccessful.
Oliver	Successful (with reservations).

Table D.5

Name	General Comments
Parker	I would rate this somewhere in the middle. F&G use a lot of facts and analysis in spite of their sarcasm, so the response is not totally ineffective. Let's put it this way. Their response would have been greatly improved if they had edited out the sarcasm—surprise, surprise!
Oliver	See comments on response paper. (also found comments like <i>Oops! Apologies</i> “unnecessary”)

Title: “The Dangers of Dichotomy: A Reply to Hulstijn”

Author: Ellen Bialystok

Type: Primary Response

6. On the whole, Bialystok shows no personal offense, and seems to try to avoid criticizing Hulstijn personally (*Hulstijn's argument is based on an incorrect dichotomy* as opposed to *Hulstijn's beliefs are incorrect* [46]). Would you agree that this technique is more likely to promote successful communication than a direct focus on Hulstijn himself? **YES / NO**

Table D.6

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

7. Bialystok clearly outlines Hulstijn's position and discusses her disagreements point by point. Would you agree that this type of organization is more likely to result in successful communication than criticism offered without context? **YES / NO**

Table D.7

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes, but <i>criticism offered without context</i> is a highly-charged phrase.

8. At no time does Bialystok employ any high-intensity verbs such as *attacks*, *chides*, or *accuses*. Instead, she uses the simple citation of research studies to support her argument. And when she agrees with Hulstijn's research, she points this out as in the following passage:

Hulstijn is correct in pointing out that different aspects of linguistic knowledge are analysed at different times and at different rates. It is asynchrony in analysis that gives the process its continuous character. (49)

Would you agree that a lack of high-intensity verbs is *more* likely to result in successful communication? **YES / NO**

Table D.8

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	No.

Would you agree that finding points of agreement in another scholar's criticism is a good way to promote the successful exchange of communication? **YES / NO**

Table D.8.2

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

9. Consider the following passage:

Hulstijn remarks several times that my theorizing has changed through the years, and I make no apology for this. The delicate balance between theory and research, between empirical finding and explanation of results, is what propels

science. I am satisfied that my current descriptions are well supported by empirical data. I would not be satisfied if this current description were the final version. (51)

Would you agree that this statement reveals a willingness to participate in the professional exchange of scholarly information and an unwillingness to turn the exchange into a personal campaign? **YES / NO**

Table D.9

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

Would you agree that this passage contains no hint of personal offense or insult?
YES / NO

Table D.9.2

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

Would you agree that even mild words such as these are powerful in that they emphasize the greater importance of a professional's search for truth, rather than simply a person's need for self-gratification? **YES / NO**

Table D.9.3

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes; again, <i>need for self-gratification</i> seems very highly charged. You may be skewing your questions so they really permit one answer.

10. Would you agree that the overall tone of this response is calm and professional?
YES / NO

Table D.10

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

11. Overall, would you rate this response as:

- a. very successful
- b. successful
- c. unsuccessful
- d. very unsuccessful

Table D.11

Name	Response
Parker	Very successful.
Oliver	Very successful.

Table D.12

Name	General Comments
Parker	She is hard on his ideas and claims, but she is not hard on him personally (ex. <i>Hulstijn's contention . . . is simply incorrect</i> [p. 47]). Also, her paper is organized around eight claims he makes in his original paper—good organization and presentation.
Oliver	None.

Title: “Disembedding ‘Disembedded Figures in the Landscape . . .’: An Appraisal of Griffiths and Sheen’s ‘Reappraisal of L2 Research on Field Dependence/Independence’”

Author: Carol A. Chapelle

Type: Primary Response

13. Chapelle supports all her claims by citing pertinent studies, other researchers, etc. By being thorough and organized in her criticism, would you agree that she supports the successful exchange of information in a professional scholarly context?
YES / NO

Table D.13

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes; but see Sheen’s comment on p. 376 (Sheen is p. 99).

14. Consider the following passage:

The title of Griffiths and Sheen’s article, ‘Disembedded figures in the landscape . . .’ promises a reappraisal of the second language acquisition (SLA) research on field independence/dependence (FI/D). A reappraisal of this work is indeed warranted after two decades of research on the topic. Unfortunately, Griffiths and Sheen (G and S) ‘reappraised’ without first appraising the details of the theory proposed or research conducted in this area. Although their article touched on some of the issues relevant to understanding this work, they confused enough of the fundamentals so as to make no sense of it at all. They could therefore conclude only that ‘FI/D has not, and never has had, any relevance to second-language learning’ (G and S: 133) and (ironically) that researchers should be warned against reviewing literature in a superficial fashion, using sources carelessly, and failing to evaluate assumptions (G and S: 145). In other words, their reappraisal concludes that SLA-FI/D work is ill-founded and that researchers should be advised to practice principles of good scholarship. (375)

By stating that *A reappraisal of this work is indeed warranted after two decades of research on the topic*, Chapelle prefaces her disagreement with agreement, even commendation. Would you agree that this an effective way to promote the successful exchange of ideas in a professional scholarly context? **YES / NO**

Table D.14

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

Chappelle's use of the verb *confused* and her assertion that regarding the topic of their article, Griffiths and Sheen *make no sense*, both imply that Griffiths and Sheen have conducted unsound, even amateurish, research. This implication, in turn, reflects badly on the researchers' scholarly credibility. Do you believe that such terms are too intense and too personally focused in this professional scholarly context? **YES / NO**

Table D.14.2

Name	Response
Parker	No.
Oliver	The issue here is <i>makes no sense at all</i> ; this disallows <i>any</i> sense, and is too strong.

Chappelle notes that Griffiths and Sheen *conclude . . . (ironically)* that researchers should be warned against reviewing literature in a superficial fashion, using sources carelessly, and failing to evaluate assumptions. This statement implies, of course, that Griffiths and Sheen are guilty of all these things. Do you believe that this type of implication, being extremely personally focused, is appropriate in a professional scholarly context? **YES / NO**

Table D.14.3

Name	Response
Parker	Yes; remember, she's beating them with their own words.
Oliver	I don't see this as personally focused. If used accurately in reference to research and methodology, they are acceptable.

Do you believe that terms such as superficial, carelessly, and failing, are too intense for a professional scholarly context given that they can easily be construed as personal insult, not professional commentary? **YES / NO**

Table D.14.4

Name	Response
Parker	No.
Oliver	No; these are wrong if used personally. If used accurately in reference to research and methodology, they are acceptable.

15. Consider the following passage:

Among the opinions G and S cited was that of Tiedemann (1989), who observed that after three decades of research on cognitive styles, still no one can claim whether or not they exist; he sees life as too short to continue such research. In my opinion, life is both too short and too complex for us to ignore concepts such as cognitive style which express some of our intuitions about students and which facilitate appreciation for the divergent approaches to thinking and learning. Of course, I can appreciate why some prefer not to pursue an idea which appears to have lost the interest of the 'authorities' and which rests on a construct currently without an adequate means of measurement. But, personally, I believe that the most important and relevant human constructs are those which are neither interesting to 'authorities' nor measurable at present. (381)

In your opinion, does the tone of Chapelle's response reveal a deep professional interest in the topic? **YES / NO**

Table D.15

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

If so, would you agree that in spite of any mistakes she might have made, Chapelle fulfills the purpose of the response in contributing to the scholarly exchange of ideas, an exchange which is motivated by professional, not personal, needs?
YES / NO

Table D.15.2

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

16. Overall, would you rate this SRP as:

- a. very successful
- b. successful
- c. unsuccessful
- d. very unsuccessful

Table D.16

Name	Response
Parker	Successful.
Oliver	Successful.

Table D.17

Name	General Comments
Parker	None.
Oliver	None.

Title: "A Rebuttal to Chapelle's Response to Griffiths and Sheen"

Author: Ronald Sheen

Type: Secondary Response

18. Consider the following passage:

It will serve no purpose to repeat the arguments already explored in detail in the original article, particularly as Chapelle has failed to offer any convincing rebuttal thereof. What she has done is to raise numerous minor points largely irrelevant to the central issue. I will comment on several and ignore the rest of fear of prolonging the excessive time already devoted to this field of research. (98-99)

Do you think that Sheen's deliberate exclusion of information is an attempt to discount the weight of such information? **YES / NO**

Table D.18

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	No.

Is such an exclusion appropriate, given that without some sort of direct comparison to Chapelle's argument, Sheen's statement may be misleading? **YES / NO**

Table D.18.2

Name	Response
Parker	No.
Oliver	I don't understand this question.

Do you think that by attaching the adjectives *numerous* and *minor* to the term *points*, and by using terms like *irrelevant* and *excessive*, Sheen encourages the reader to discount the import of Chapelle's critique? **YES / NO**

Table D.18.3

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes, but unsuccessfully.

Do you think that the use of the verb *ignore* also encourages this while highlighting Sheen's concern with his own ego (Sheen is so confident that he is right that he can simply ignore Chapelle)? **YES / NO**

Table D.18.4

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	No; I don't see Sheen's concern with his own ego.

Does the use of so many aforementioned negative terms constitute inappropriate language intensity in a professional scholarly context? **YES / NO**

Table D.18.5

Name	Response
Parker	No; problem is not intensity, but rather that he is side-stepping her charges.
Oliver	Yes; I'm not sure I'd say it was <i>inappropriate</i> —it just might lead one to discount his [Sheen's] own arguments.

19. Consider the following passage:

To use the word 'insightful' to describe the decision of the first researchers in the field (Naiman, Frölich, Stern, and Todesco 1978; Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesee 1976) to use EFT and F/D construct renders the word meaningless. They omitted to carry out the necessary exhaustive investigation of either the test or the construct and in doing so created an illusory impression of a soundly-based hypothesis. I would suggest that 'cavalier' would be a more appropriate term and that 'insightful' might be used more appropriately for those who wisely refrained from further research in this field. (99)

Do you think that Sheen is using language intensity to disparage his critics and their views (*cavalier* scholars who *created an illusory impression of a soundly-based*

hypothesis) in favor of himself and his own views (an *insightful* scholar *who wisely refrained from further research in this field*)? **YES / NO**

Table D.19

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes.

20. Consider the following passage:

In conclusion, may I add that although others may wish to pursue this controversy, I prefer to follow the example of the early researchers in this domain, abandon it and seek more fertile fields—and this for the reasons already amply provided in Griffiths and Sheen’s paper. (100)

Ironically, by involving himself in a response exchange, Sheen is indeed pursuing controversy. Therefore, does his failure to articulate or rearticulate his points make it seem as if his real point is not avoiding controversy, but avoiding lowering or weakening his position? **YES / NO**

Table D.20

Name	Response
Parker	Yes.
Oliver	Yes; good point.

21. Overall, would you rate this SRP as:

- a. very successful
- b. successful
- c. unsuccessful
- d. very unsuccessful

Table D.21

Name	Response
Parker	Very unsuccessful.
Oliver	Unsuccessful.

Table D.22

Name	General Comments
Parker	Main problem is that Sheen's response cannot be read on it's own (i.e. reader must refer to G&S and C to make sense out of what he is saying). His response is further undercut by sarcasm and side-stepping.
Oliver	Consider also Chapelle's statement pg. 377: <i>Their prose runs in circles</i> . This smacks of personal attack, and may have drawn the tone for his response.

APPENDIX E: COMBINED RESPONSES TO *GENERAL* READER QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS CONCERNING GENERAL RESPONSE STYLE AND CONTENT

1. It is generally accepted that among scholars of various fields and academic discourse communities, there are rules (sometimes unstated) which govern scholarly responses to criticism. Statements made by Richard D. Altick and John J. Fenstermaker (1993) in chapter eight of *The Art of Literary Research*, "The Scholar's Life," illustrate this point:

Our profession has no room for intemperate criticism of any kind, least of all in print. Differences of opinion there will always be, and scholarly competence not being a gift distributed equally among all practitioners, lapses of judgement and imperfections of knowledge will sometimes call for comment. . . . But the necessary process of debate and correction can, and should, be conducted with dignity and courtesy. Name-calling, personalities, aspersions on one's professional ability, and similar below-the-belt tactics are not to be condoned. Controversial points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility. (253)

What are your feelings on this topic? Do you agree that writers of scholarly response papers should take these words to heart? (Circle only one response here.)

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please explain briefly the rationale behind your position.

Table E.1

Journal	Name	Response
<i>AL</i>	Parker	Strongly agree; emotional baggage obscures the facts. Whenever I write a paper—especially a response to criticism of one of my articles or books—I always go over it carefully to weed out any hint of emotional overlay. I want the facts to speak for themselves.

Table E.1 continued

<i>AL</i>	Oliver	Agree; [however] I question the term “aspersions on one’s professional ability.” This is sometimes germane to the ability to make an argument—that is, I think it is difficult to separate scholarly competence from professional ability. But dispassionate evaluation is necessary for the respondent to have credibility.
<i>EAL</i>	White	<p>Strongly disagree; the Altick/Fenstermaker assertion about civility is purposefully historical and anti-contextual, as it appeals to “the ancient association of scholarship with civility,” its insistence that civil debate best allows and encourages the pursuit of knowledge, and its assumption that the objects of criticisms, called blandly the “imperfections of knowledge,” will amount to “lapses” in talent. Ignored here are the equally ancient association of engaged scholarship with polemic, any critical assessment of the ways in which certain conventions of “civility” blunt the pursuit of knowledge, and the reality that many disagreements are not based upon “lapses” but on fundamental moral and political differences.</p> <p>With the above three assumptions in place, the criticism of ad hominem attacks or dirty and dishonest forms of argument is misleading and—some might argue—a fine example of poor argumentation, here specifically a sleight-of-hand conflation of polemic with dirty name-calling.</p> <p>So while the premises of your introduction are unobjectionable—that scholars generally agree that there are rules which govern responses to criticism and that, furthermore, there should be rules—I object to Altick/Fenstermaker’s conflation of rules of response and criticism with historically specific forms of behavior (and in fact do not like the “dialogue” analogy, or the [very different] “communication flow” image), and would emphasize instead rules of cognition and “projects” (in the broadest sense) of knowledge.</p>
<i>EAL</i>	Name Withheld	Strongly agree; I think intellectual exchange is valuable and important, and incivility works against such exchange.
<i>JTWC</i>	Curtis	Strongly agree; language shouldn’t be used to bludgeon opposing ideas into submission; to allow it to be so used makes it more likely that only the most resolute will participate in a discussion. This will limit the range of views and makes “discussion” entirely persuasive, rather than revelatory, in nature.
<i>JTWC</i>	Barnes	Agree; Altick and Fenstermaker’s statement is an easy one to agree with. I choose to rather than to allow extra latitude in extreme cases.

Table E.1 continued

CCC	Name Withheld	Strongly agree; as scholars and researchers, we search for truth, and that search quickly shows us that people can interpret different situations and objects and ideas differently, and yet validly. Our civility to each other honors that diversity of interpretation and encourages new thoughts and more dialogue.
CCC	Name Withheld	Strongly agree; from a strictly rhetorical perspective, I am most inclined to read, consider, and take seriously arguments that focus on the merits of the opposition's position. I am unlikely to be receptive to <i>ad hominem</i> arguments.
CCC2	Mattingly	Agree; often attacks get attention and gain notoriety for scholars. Many seem to believe <i>any</i> attention is good. I find it disturbing that scholars often begin or offer their own work by opposing themselves to others. This is a convention of scholarship, but I don't necessarily like it, and find I have little patience for unnecessarily mean attacks.
CCC2	Liggett	Strongly agree; we have e-mail, conversations with peers, and other informal means of being nasty if we want. I agree that <i>published</i> scholarly responses can and should be civil.
PMLA	Nardo	Strongly agree; the issue should be the focus, not the author of the article. Comments about the author detract from discussion of the issue at hand.
PMLA	Kincade	Strongly agree; people will always be able to interpret different ways. A difference in interpretation, if both are supportable, does not constitute ineptitude on either side. When arguing becomes fighting, someone is generally trying to conceal something.
PMLA2	Name Withheld	Agree; unnecessarily harsh tactics and/or so-called "below the belt" attacks (<i>ad hominem</i>) can, I've found, obscure genuine debate about contested ideas beneath defensiveness (on the parts of either author or respondent) thus rob the exchange of any progress or fruitfulness.
PMLA2	Name Withheld	Disagree; the direct reference to the Marquis of Queensbury Rules for this sort of fighting suggests what is really being designed here are ways to take what can be rather nasty and make it somehow "civilized." Fighting is still fighting, however, and the idea that changing styles = changing behaviors is fairly suspect and a bit stuffy, if not hypocritical. Altick's own piece is a marvel of stylized assumptions and stereotypes. Accurate on a formal level; wholly inadequate to the social exchange being described.

2. Do you agree that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information? **YES / NO**

Do you believe that any of the following elements threaten this goal and should be avoided? (Circle all that apply.)

- a. Statements relevant to the case **ONLY** in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being deliberately misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort*, *attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").
- f. None of the above.

Table E.2

Journal	Name	Response
<i>AL</i>	Parker	Yes; all of the above. Even if a writer does so [is deliberately misleading] it is better to nail him on the facts. Never yield to the temptation to claim the higher moral ground. (Look what it did to poor Clinton.)
<i>AL</i>	Oliver	Yes; accusations which cannot be proved (but these are <i>not</i> necessarily face-saving—they should support the argument by substantiation from other scholars); negative verbs and disproportionate language intensity (depending on context and validity); and language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context.

Table E.2 continued

<i>EAL</i>	White	Yes; shifting the terms from “exchange” (which implies conversation between participants in the debate) to “pursuit” (which implies assessment by observers of the debate). Re: the list of threatening elements, I’ve circled only (a) because the category is the only one that seems to unambiguously refer to material not directly relevant to the argument at stake. I can imagine, thinking of different examples: (b) an accusation that cannot be easily supported (e.g., that journal X is hostile to feminist work); (c) cases in which such verbs are entirely truthful and appropriate; (d) language considered inappropriate, as per Altick/Fenstermaker, that would nonetheless be illuminating; and (e) useful, productive, and valid “ranting.”
<i>EAL</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; all of the above.
<i>JTWC</i>	Curtis	Yes; all of the above.
<i>JTWC</i>	Barnes	Yes; all of the above with the exception of (c) verbs.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	No; only (d) language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context and (e) disproportionate language intensity.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; all of the above.
<i>CCC2</i>	Mattingly	Yes; with the exception of (a) irrelevant statements and (e) disproportionate language intensity.
<i>CCC2</i>	Liggett	No; not necessarily; only (b) accusations which cannot be proved or supported, (d) language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context, and (e) disproportionate language intensity.
<i>PMLA</i>	Nardo	Yes (should be); all of the above with the exception of (c) verbs. You can certainly use verbs that claim an author is incorrect.
<i>PMLA</i>	Kincade	Yes; all of the above, with (c) verbs only sometimes.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; all of the above with the exception of (c) verbs.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	No; none of the above.

3. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue? **YES / NO**

If so, do you believe that the success or non-success of such dialogue can be affected by the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear

purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense? **YES / NO**

Table E.3

Journal	Name	Response
<i>AL</i>	Parker	Yes; yes.
<i>AL</i>	Oliver	Yes; yes.
<i>EAL</i>	White	Yes; yes.
<i>EAL</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>JTWC</i>	Curtis	Yes; yes.
<i>JTWC</i>	Barnes	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC2</i>	Mattingly	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC2</i>	Liggett	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA</i>	Nardo	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA</i>	Kincade	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.

4. If you answered **YES** to both parts of question three, do you believe that an unsuccessful scholarly response paper can *to some degree* affect a scholar's credibility among his peers? **YES / NO**

If so, does this lack of credibility have the *potential* to affect that scholar's (circle all that apply):

- a. Future publication
- b. Job promotion
- c. Peer standing
- d. None of the above

Table E.4

Journal	Name	Response
<i>AL</i>	Parker	Yes; future publication and peer standing.
<i>AL</i>	Oliver	Yes (I've seen this happen); peer standing.
<i>EAL</i>	White	Yes; peer standing.
<i>EAL</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; future publication and peer standing.
<i>JTWC</i>	Curtis	Yes; future publication, job promotion, and peer standing.
<i>JTWC</i>	Barnes	Yes; future publication, job promotion, and peer standing.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; future publication, job promotion, and peer standing.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; future publication, job promotion, and peer standing. But perhaps controversy of any sort, with its impact on name recognition, would affect the scholar's career <i>favorably</i> .
<i>CCC2</i>	Mattingly	Yes; peer standing.
<i>CCC2</i>	Liggett	Yes; future publication (maybe) and peer standing.
<i>PMLA</i>	Nardo	No to future publication, if he or she wittily fights back; yes to job promotion and peer standing, if he or she is not yet tenured.
<i>PMLA</i>	Kincade	Yes; future publication, job promotion, and peer standing.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; peer standing.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; but only to the extent that it reveals inability with the forms of exchange and how to handle them.

5. Would you say that [journal] is a highly-respected, or at the very least important, journal in your field? **YES / NO**

That writers published here have some stake in making a good impression on their readers? **YES / NO**

Table E.5

Journal	Name	Response
<i>AL</i>	Parker	Yes; yes.
<i>AL</i>	Oliver	No basis for judgment; [but] yes, this is true for <i>any</i> publication in <i>any</i> journal.
<i>EAL</i>	White	Yes; yes.
<i>EAL</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>JTWC</i>	Curtis	Yes; yes.

Table E.5 continued

<i>JTWC</i>	Barnes	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC2</i>	Mattingly	Yes; yes.
<i>CCC2</i>	Liggett	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA</i>	Nardo	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA</i>	Kincade	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld	Yes; yes.

APPENDIX F: TALLY OF *GENERAL* READER RESPONSES

Numbers here reflect the responses of the fourteen readers who completed questionnaires for this study.

1. It is generally accepted that among scholars of various fields and academic discourse communities, there are rules (sometimes unstated) which govern scholarly responses to criticism. Statements made by Richard D. Altick and John J. Fenstermaker (1993) in chapter eight of *The Art of Literary Research*, "The Scholar's Life," illustrate this point:

Our profession has no room for intemperate criticism of any kind, least of all in print. Differences of opinion there will always be, and scholarly competence not being a gift distributed equally among all practitioners, lapses of judgement and imperfections of knowledge will sometimes call for comment. . . . But the necessary process of debate and correction can, and should, be conducted with dignity and courtesy. Name-calling, personalities, aspersions on one's professional ability, and similar below-the-belt tactics are not to be condoned. Controversial points can be made, effectively and adequately, without betraying the ancient association of scholarship with civility. (253)

What are your feelings on this topic? Do you agree that writers of scholarly response papers should take these words to heart? (Circle only one response here.)

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Table F.1

Strongly agree	8
Agree	4
Not sure	0
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	1

2. Do you agree that the general purpose of the scholarly response paper is to promote the scholarly exchange of information? **YES / NO**

Table F.2

Yes	11
No	3

Do you believe that any of the following elements threaten this goal and should be avoided? (Circle all that apply.)

- a. Statements relevant to the case **ONLY** in that they support the respondent's personal need to save face (e.g. the mention of compliments and awards from other quarters).
- b. Accusations which cannot be proved or supported (e.g. one scholar's claim that one of his peers is "plotting" against him).
- c. Verbs which, for example, characterize another writer or another writer's intentions as being deliberately misleading, incorrect, or malicious (e.g. *distort*, *attack*).
- d. Language considered inappropriate in a professional scholarly context (e.g. name-calling).
- e. Disproportionate language intensity (i.e. "ranting").
- f. None of the above.

Table F.2.2

a	9
b	11
c	7
d	12
e	11
f	1

3. Do you believe that scholarly response papers can reasonably be termed successful or unsuccessful according whether or not they contribute to or support professional scholarly dialogue? **YES / NO**

Table F.3

Yes	14
No	0

If so, do you believe that the success or non-success of such dialogue can be affected by the presence or absence of such elements as relevant information, clear purpose, personal accusations, accusatory verbs, and language which is either inappropriate in a scholarly context or too highly intense? **YES / NO**

Table F.3.2

Yes	14
No	0

4. If you answered **YES** to both parts of question three, do you believe that an unsuccessful scholarly response paper can *to some degree* affect a scholar's credibility among his peers? **YES / NO**

Table F.4

Yes	14
No	0

If so, does this lack of credibility have the *potential* to affect that scholar's (circle all that apply):

- a. Future publication
- b. Job promotion
- c. Peer standing
- d. None of the above

Table F.4.2

a	8
b	6
c	13
d	1

APPENDIX G: READERS PARTICIPATING IN THE CURRENT STUDY

Journal	Name	Title	E-Mail	Phone #	Use Name?
<i>AL</i>	Frank Parker	Retired Professor	f.p.parker@ieee.org	218-834-2508	Yes
<i>AL</i>	Lisi Oliver	Assistant Professor	Lolive1@unix1.sncc.lsu.edu	388-3047	Yes; if I approve references
<i>EAL</i>	Name Withheld*	Associate Professor	Withheld.	Withheld.	No
<i>EAL</i>	Ed White	Assistant Professor	Edwhite@unix1.sncc.lsu.edu	388-3132	Yes
<i>JTWC</i>	Dale Barnes	Instructor	Endale@lsu.edu	388-3024	Yes
<i>JTWC</i>	Charlotte Curtis	Instructor	Ccurtis@lsu.edu	388-2833	Yes
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld*	Assistant Professor of English	Withheld.	Withheld.	No
<i>CCC</i>	Name Withheld*	Assistant Professor, ESL Coordinator	Withheld.	Withheld.	No response
<i>CCC2</i>	Carol Mattingly	Associate Professor	Enmatt@unix1.sncc.lsu.edu	388-3136	Yes
<i>CCC2</i>	Sarah Liggett	Professor, Director of Freshman English	Enligg@lsu.edu	388-3040	Yes
<i>PMLA</i>	Anna Nardo	Alumni Professor of English Literature	Anardo@unix1.sncc.lsu.edu	344-5703	Yes
<i>PMLA</i>	Kit Kincade	Visiting Assistant Professor	Kkincade@sfasu.edu	409-552-7937	Yes
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld*	Associate Professor of English	Withheld.	Withheld.	No
<i>PMLA2</i>	Name Withheld*	Assistant Professor	Withheld.	Withheld.	No

*These readers wished to remain anonymous.

VITA

Lynna Louise Dunn Peneguy was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on November 3, 1970, and spent the greater part of her growing-up years happily curled up with books under staircases and in dim closets, doing her best to “ruin her eyesight.” She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, with minors in French and education, from Arkansas Tech University in 1992. She also earned a Master of Liberal Arts Degree, with an emphasis in communication, from the same institution in 1994.

Between the beginning and end of her time as a member of LSU’s English Department, Peneguy had many adventures, made many mistakes, experienced much anxiety, accomplished many feats, savored many Cajun and Creole delicacies, and was neither completely naughty nor completely nice. And in spite of the fact that plenty of the gilt edges of life’s stories have rubbed off, marking her with their dubious glitter, she’s pretty content after all.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Lynna Dunn Peneguy

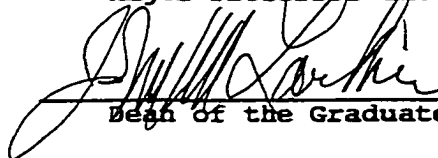
Major Field: English

Title of Dissertation: A Description and Analysis of the Scholarly Response Paper as an Academic Genre: Determining How Linguistic, Social, and Psychological Variables Affect Its Success/Failure and the Professional Credibility of Its Author

Approved:

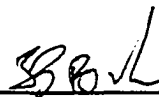


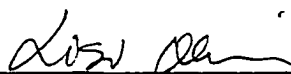
Major Professor and Chairman

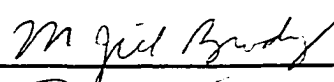


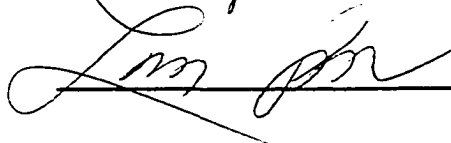
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:





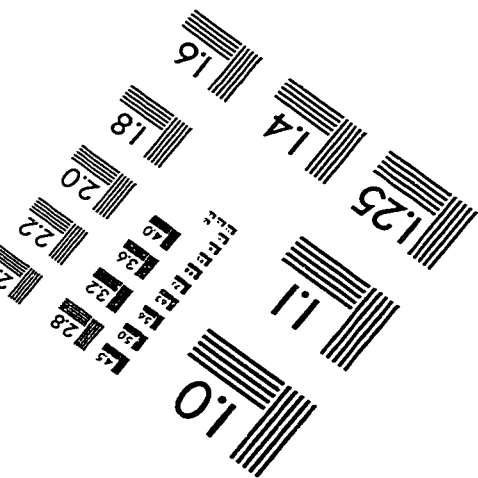
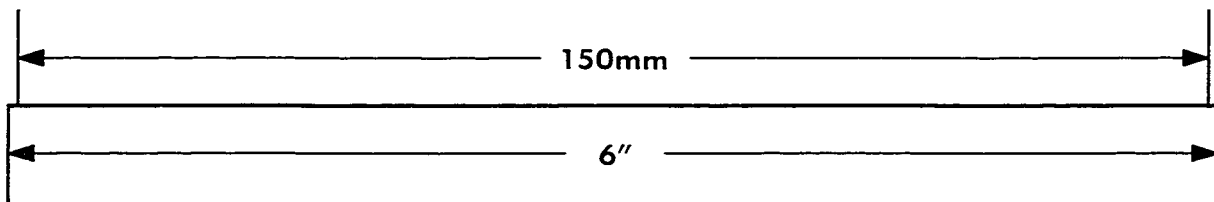
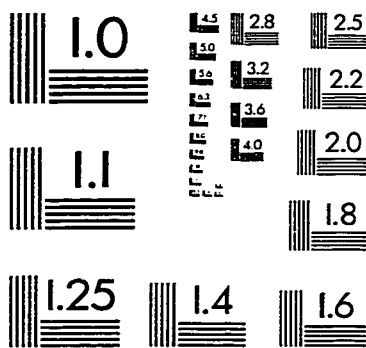
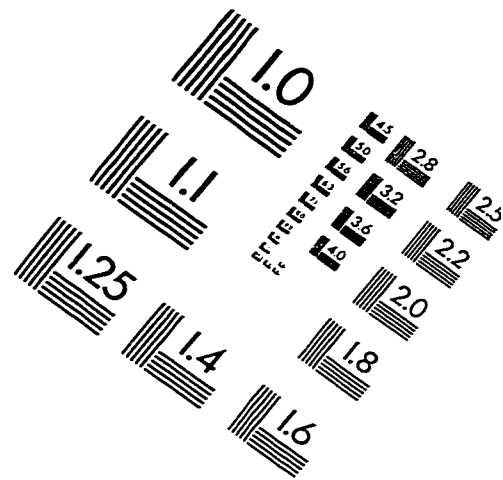
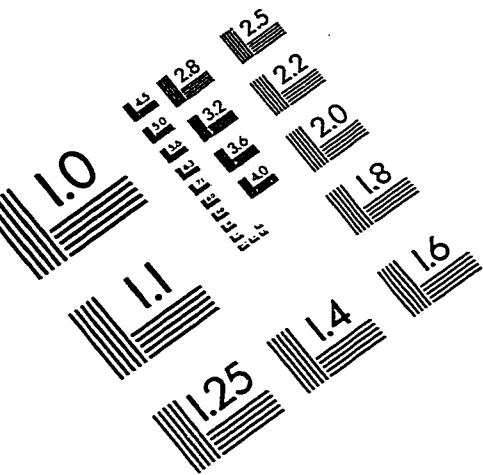




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